An exploration of factors influencing organisational learning transfer using an activity system analytical framework

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Abstract

In an effort to create corporate learning transformation, organisations invested an estimated $US171 billion [$AUD165.8 billion] in 2011 within the United States on training initiatives. Estimates were unavailable for Australian organisations, however from the US estimates, less than 30 percent of all new learning was reported to have been successfully transferred into the workplace (Holton 2012). With these substantial sums being invested annually, assessing the organisational returns for training activities have become a significant concern for both trainers and business managers (Miller 2002).

From the perspective of an employee’s professional development training, the aim of this research was to understand enabling and limiting factors of organisational learning transfer and to develop a framework or guide for identifying these factors. The objectives of this study were to firstly explore overarching learning transfer barriers as moderating factors influencing learning transfer; secondly, identify a simplified methodology and process for investigating learning transfer issues within organisations; and thirdly, from the analysis of data, attempt to provide an explanation for the gap between the reported high annual investments in organisational training and the suggested low learning transfer rates produced by training.

This study's qualitative investigation explored beliefs and experiences of managers, learning and development professionals and employees within multiple Australian organisations. Identified in this study were a number of factors that influenced learning transfer, drawn into three overarching moderating variables that were supported by literature. These three moderating variables were adapted to an activity system analytical framework as a research instrument, which provided research structure and process. This study’s analytical framework filled the gap in literature by answering calls for a simplified learning transfer diagnostic using mini-scale variables (Devos et al. 2007). This analytical framework has been presented as an alternative shortened version of the learning transfer system inventory (LSTI) (Holton et al. 1997).
This study's findings identified both positive and negative practices organisations engaged in that enabled or limited an employee's learning transfer. This study's contribution to practice extended these emergent results and presented the reader with a recommendation for an effective organisational learning process. This study's contributions to knowledge was identified in six research results: the list of organisational barriers to learning transfer may be non-exhaustive; an activity system analytical framework was a suitable methodology and simplified diagnostic for exploring learning transfer within organisations; reasons were provided, in part, for the current high estimated amounts spent on training annually and why this large amount produced such low learning transfer results; diverse industry environments and different organisational management structures were not limiting or enabling learning transfer factors; a one-process-fits-all approach to organisational learning accountability was possible; and, addressing manager ownership, accountability, support and coaching of learning could result in effective learning transfer.

Research findings highlighted organisational and managerial support for learning was low. This lack of support created employee perceptions of low training value, reduced learner motivation and created a lack of commitment to training. A further lack of ownership and accountability from managers, together with limited or no learning processes in place, reduced the level of organisational and managerial learning support, which further reduced learner motivation to transfer and apply new learning. Where learner motivation to transfer and apply learning was high, employees had self-initiated their learning transfer independent of their managers. Results highlighted ninety percent of employees interviewed experienced low learning support from their organisation or their manager. Of this group, they either applied their learning independently, sought team and peer support to apply their learning, or chose not to apply the learning. Of the ten percent that were supported all transferred and applied their learning effectively.

Key words: Learning transfer, workplace application of learning, organisational environment, learning culture, organisational stakeholders, accountability, learning support, organisational actions, learning transfer climate, motivation, activity theory, activity system analytical framework.
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Declaration by candidate

This thesis is the work of the candidate and contains no material which has been accepted for the award to the candidate of any other degree or diploma except where due reference is made in the text of the examinable outcome. To the best of the candidate's knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text of the examinable outcome.

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Paul Edwin Lever

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Date
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Acronyms

**AASAF**: Adapted Activity System Analytical Framework

**ALP**: Adult Learning Principles

**ID**: Instructional Design

**LA**: Learning Application

**L&D**: Learning and Development

**LD**: Learning Design

**LTSI**: Learning Transfer System Inventory

**MV1**: Moderating Variable 1

**MV2**: Moderating Variable 2

**MV3**: Moderating Variable 3

**QDA**: Qualitative Data Analysis

**ROI**: Return on Investment

**TpB**: Theory of Planned Behaviour
CHAPTER ONE
Introduction

1.1 Preface

The main source of competitive advantage for an organization is its knowledge assets and its learning capacity (Argyris & Schon 1978). Senge (1990) defined a learning organisation as creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge then modifying its behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights.

This acknowledged that a process of learning transfer occurred within organisations and suggested an organisation without these skills was limiting its competitive advantage. A learning organisation is created with three things in mind: firstly, not only do individuals learn but also organisations; secondly, human beings were born learners; and thirdly, generative learning was essential to individual and organisational success (Senge 1990). In drawing these three factors together Senge suggested learning in organisations meant the continuous testing of experience, the transformation of experience into knowledge accessible to the whole organisation and learning was relevant to its core purpose.

In an effort to create corporate learning transformation, organisations invested an estimated US$134.39 billion [AUD$131.5 billion] in 2007 within the United States on training initiatives (ASTD 2008) further rising to estimates of US$171 billion [AUD$165.8 billion] in 2011 (Holton 2012). Estimates were unavailable for Australian organisations however from the US estimates less than 30 percent of all new learning was reported to have been successfully transferred into the workplace (Holton 2012) and under 50 percent of corporate learning investments resulted in organisational or individual improvements (Saks 2002). With these substantial sums invested annually, demonstrating transformational change and organisational returns for training activities have become significant concerns for both trainers and business managers (Miller 2002).

The results of this study were based on qualitative primary data from the analysis of 31 semi-structured interviews across five Australian organisations,
supplemented by the researcher’s observation notes made on the interviewee’s personal and environmental characteristics during each interview. These interviews and observations explored the formal and less formal organisational learning environments, for example the employee’s interactions with organisational processes, managers and peers and how these interactions influenced their ability to transfer and apply workplace learning.

Within the context of this study, a formal learning [training] event was used as the mediating artefact or tool and as the setting through which employees expressed beliefs, experiences and views of their organisation’s learning transfer practices prior to, during and following their training.

1.2 Investigating organisational learning transfer

The volume of learning transfer literature and studies referencing intrinsic and extrinsic factors influencing learning transfer suggested an ongoing interest, both at an academic level and at the organisational level, in addressing low learning transfer rates within institutions and organisations. Learning transfer has been widely researched and published (Argyris 1976, 1990, 1993; Edmondson & Moingeon 1999; Goold 2006; Schon 1973; Senge 1990; Starkey 1996; Steiner 1998). More recently Burke and Saks (2009) reported on the extent of prior literature, studies and models into the transference of learning from organisational training:

“Decades have been spent studying training transfer in organisational environments in recognition of a transfer problem in organisations. Theoretical models of various antecedents, empirical studies of transfer interventions and studies of best practice have all been advanced to address this continued problem” (Burke & Saks 2009, p. 382).

This study acknowledges the comment above and further recognises that all organisations and institutions are different and that one model for learning transfer has eluded researchers. Using learning transfer as the researcher’s lens, this thesis offers a framework and diagnostic process in the form of a research instrument for organisations to use, guide investigation and to explore their organisational issues of low learning transfer rates.
Identifying areas of prior learning transfer research, together with aligned research and theories, this study drew together research under an adapted activity system analytical framework as a research instrument. The adapted analytical framework further served as a guide for question development that focused on identifying contradictions between moderating variables, the organisational learner and their effective learning transfer. Isolating contradictions led to emergent themes arising from the data, which suggested three overarching influences or barriers to workplace learning transfer within organisations.

This study further offers the adapted activity system analytical framework as a research design method, investigative guide or diagnostic for institutional or organisational inquiries that enable analysts to identify, structure and develop individually tailored learning transfer solutions.

1.3 Introduction to Research problem

This study explores the concept of whom and/or what is responsible for organisational learning transfer. This research further advances a qualitative research methodology that enables contextual investigations into the influences of organisational barriers to learning transfer at individual, management and organisational levels.

Improving learning processes within organisations requires the creative destruction of barriers to learning transfer (Starkey 1996). These barriers occur as a result of managerial efforts to implement new ideologies that are not accepted, communicated or understood by employees (Steiner 1998). It is possible however, that many of the variables identified in learning transfer models are perhaps trivial or of minor importance in affecting significant change in learning transfer (Burke & Saks 2009). A mere handful therefore of those numerous learning transfer influences, by themselves, could have a large impact on improving low transfer rates (Burke & Saks 2009). To identify these highly influential or overarching learning transfer barriers, several learning transfer studies and models are explored.
A study into organisational learning culture, learning transfer climate and perceived innovation within organisations suggested situational factors reflected the psychological climate dynamic within organisations, including an individual’s expectations and self-beliefs about learning application (Bates & Khasawneh 2005). A learning organisation's culture embodies a shared pattern of values and beliefs about the importance of learning, its dissemination and application and that these values and beliefs function to shape individual perceptions and behaviours associated with the acquisition and application of new knowledge and skills (Bates & Khasawneh 2005). Bates and Khasawneh commented in context of how effective organisational learning transfer influenced organisational performance:

“If an organisational learning culture is to lead to innovation and long-term performance improvements, then the production and sharing of knowledge must be accompanied by efforts at applying and transferring that knowledge in ways that help organisations function more effectively” (Bates & Khasawneh 2005, p. 99).

A positive learning culture therefore embraced a supportive psychological climate enabling individuals to transfer and apply workplace learning. This occurred when learning initiatives were supported by an organisation-wide pattern of values and beliefs about the importance of learning, its implementation and its delivery (Bates & Khasawneh 2005).

Bates and Khasawneh (2005) further posit that by using data collected through focus groups or interviews would be able to provide insight into the cues, contingencies and other organisational attributes that influenced employee attitudes, beliefs and behaviours relevant to learning and its creative application:

“This information could then be used to design interventions to reduce barriers and enhance catalysts for creativity and innovation” (Bates & Khasawneh 2005, p. 107).

### 1.4 Research aim

From the perspective of an employee’s professional development training, the aim of this research was to understand enabling and limiting factors of organisational learning transfer and to develop a framework or guide for identifying these factors. The objectives of this study were to firstly explore overarching learning transfer
barriers as moderating factors influencing learning transfer; secondly, identify a simplified methodology and process for investigating learning transfer issues within organisations; and thirdly, from the analysis of data, attempt to provide an explanation for the gap between the reported high annual investments in organisational training and the suggested low learning transfer rates produced by training.

This study explored learning transfer literature and identified intrinsic and extrinsic influences individuals encountered when attempting to transfer their workplace learning.

1.5 Aspects to research design methodology
Several theories were instrumental in the development of this study’s research instrument. Vygotsky’s activity theory (1978) and Engestrom’s activity system (1987) provided the theoretical platform. Vygotsky’s activity theory offered that between the thought of action and the performance of that activity, a mediating artefact or tool exists that influenced the activity. Engestrom’s activity system framework added three further variables, that of rules, community and division of labour to Vygotsky’s activity theory and suggested that these areas of further influence occurred in any human activity. This study adapted Engestrom’s activity system framework to explore barriers to learning transfer within organisations.

Chapter 2 identifies overarching learning transfer variables within the literature discussed in Chapter 2. Three overarching variables were adapted to Engestrom’s (1999) activity system analytical framework. Engestrom described his framework elements as components or simply as variables, whereas Mwanza (2001) identified the elements as mediators and Whitefield (2004) labelled them mediators of activity. A discussion is presented within Chapter 3 of the confusion that exists within social research regarding the definition of the terms moderating and mediating variables. From that discussion, this study proposes that the most appropriate description of this study’s three variables (MV1, MV2 and MV3) as identified in this qualitative investigation is the term moderating variables. The term moderating variables is therefore the term used throughout this study to identify the researcher’s contribution to practice and knowledge.
From Engestrom’s activity system analytical framework, the framework’s three variables (rules, community and division of labour) were adapted to align in context with this study’s first research objective of exploring overarching learning transfer barriers as moderating factors that influenced organisational learning transfer.

Support for this study’s investigation into barriers to learning transfer is provided in Chapter 2 where multiple factors were identified in the literature that further influenced organisational learning transfer. Firstly, Engestrom’s initial variable (rules) was aligned in this research as the organisational environment (moderating variable 1 - MV1) and included organisational learning culture, perceptions of learning value, learning assessment, the processes for learning and learning alignment to individual and organisational goals. Biggs (2005) provided support and alignment for this study’s MV1 from the theory of his adapted model of the 3P’s of teaching and learning. Drawn from the work of Reid (1987), Biggs identified and adapted the potential influence of institutional constraints on the outcome of an individual’s learning. Reid identified these institutional constraints as the rules that informed, guided and influenced an individual’s everyday organisational environment and therefore their learning environment. Theory therefore provided support for this research in adapting Engestrom’s (1987) term rules as this study’s moderating variable 1 (MV1) - organisational environment.

Engestrom’s second variable (community) was aligned in this research as the learner’s audience or in context to this research as the learner’s organisational stakeholders (moderating variable 2 - MV2). Factors of stakeholder influence, ownership and accountability for learning and the level of learning support and follow up that managers and peers offered were explored. Schlenker, Britt, Pennington, Murphy and Doherty (1994) provided the support from theory in their accountability pyramid. The accountability pyramid identified that in any behaviour change there was an influence from an audience (an individual or group of individuals). Schlenker et al. suggested this audience appraised an individual’s progress and or performance. This proposed an organisational audience consisted of a range of individual or group of stakeholders that were able to provide influence over an employee’s ability to transfer their learning. This study explored
the influence of these internal stakeholders including the senior management team, employee's manager, their learning and development department and their peers as the employee's audience for learning transfer. Theory therefore supported adapting Schlenker's (1994) term audience [group] as this study's moderating variable 2 (MV2) - organisational stakeholders.

Engestrom's third variable (division of labour) was aligned and adapted in this research as organisational actions (moderating variable 3 - MV3). Issues of learner beliefs, motivation, perceived versus actual behavioural control, the learning transfer climate and workplace application of learning were explored. Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour suggested the nature and strength of an individual's beliefs, motivation and level of perceived behavioural control influenced learning transfer. This research investigated the relationship between an individual's perceived and their actual behavioural control and examined whether the actions of others influenced this relationship. The theory of planned behaviour therefore provided support for adapting Engestrom's (1987) term division of labour as this study's moderating variable 3 (MV3) - organisational actions.

Further support for this study's methodology and research design process was provided by Mwanza's (2002) notational structure for interview question forming [question development], data coding and data analysis. Developed specifically for an activity system analytical framework, the notational structure was adapted in line with this study's research aim. The notational structure provided support and guidance from theory on interview question development and the analysis of data aligned to explore intrinsic and extrinsic factors identified from literature within each of this study's three moderating variables (MV1, MV2, and MV3).

The identification and exploration of factors that influenced organisational learning transfer in the researcher's adapted activity system analytical framework, or research instrument, provided the research design and diagnostic for investigating the research aim. Chapter 3, Methodology, discusses this research design, the research instrument and that of activity theory, activity system theory and supporting theories and models.
1.6 Researcher’s perspective
The researcher's experience as a manager, mentor and coach within several global organisations and more recently within the area of learning and development has advanced an interest in organisational development and in the performance of organisations including how individuals transfer and apply workplace learning. This has inspired the researcher with the passion to understand more about the organisational learning environment that enabled or limited learning transfer within the workplace.

1.7 Contributions to practice and knowledge
This study results provided methods and practices for managers and employees to act upon when attempting to improve organisational learning transfer. Organisations must concern themselves with the learning process, the workplace environment as a learning context and the application by learners of new knowledge and skills gained through learning activities (Taylor, Russ-Eft & Chan 2005). This research investigated organisational learning practices from three perspectives: within the context of an organisational learning environment, the influence of an employee’s learning stakeholders and the actions of organisational stakeholders.

This study’s findings identified both positive and negative practices organisations engaged in that enabled or limited an employee’s learning transfer. These practices are discussed in Chapter 7, however this research extends these emergent results and presents the reader with a recommendation for an effective organisational learning process. For this organisational learning process to produce a positive learning transfer climate, this study’s three moderating variables (organisational environment - MV1, organisational stakeholders - MV2 and organisational actions - MV3) should be considered. The recommended organisational learning process provided a contribution to practice.

Contributions to knowledge from this research were identified in six research results. The first three provided a response to this study's three research objectives followed by a further three emergent research contributions to knowledge:
• Organisational barriers to learning transfer (first research objective): The list of organisational barriers to learning transfer may be non-exhaustive.

• Suitable research design framework and simplified diagnostic (second research objective): The adapted activity system analytical framework was a suitable methodology and simplified diagnostic for exploring learning transfer within organisations.

• High annual training expenditure versus low learning transfer rates (third research objective): Reasons were provided, in part, for the current high estimated amounts spent on training annually and why this large amount produced such low learning transfer results.

• Diverse industry environments: Diverse industry environments and different organisational management structures were not limiting or enabling learning transfer factors.

• A one-process-fits-all approach for accountability: A one-process-fits-all approach to organisational learning accountability was possible.

• Manager’s ownership, accountability, support and coaching of learning: Implementation of these factors could result in effective learning transfer.

These six research contributions to knowledge have extended the theoretical work of authors and tested theory into new areas. This research’s contributions have added to knowledge in the fields of learning transfer, learning and development, organisational development and organisational accountability.

1.8 Outline of chapters

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature that considers theories, organisational aspects of the learning process and barriers that enables or limits an individual’s learning transfer. Chapter 2 has been organised to explore the literature on this study’s three moderating variables, organisational environment (MV1), organisational stakeholders (MV2) and organisational actions (MV3) as introduced above.
Within Chapter 2, several authors provide support for this investigation and have recommended further research into learning transfer (Bates & Khasawneh 2005; Denison 1996; Devos et al. 2007; Goold 2006; Holton et al. 1997) whilst further authors suggest that additional research into stakeholder accountability, engagement, accountability studies across multiple organisations and managerial power would enrich the field of knowledge (Ammeter et al. 2004; Greenwood 2007; Hall 2005; Hall, Blass & Ferris 2003; Kohns & Ponton 2006; Roome & Wijen 2006).

Chapter 2 identifies theories, aspects and barriers that guided this study’s approach to the exploration of learning transfer within organisations. In particular, Steiner (1998) and Goold (2006) are presented on learning transfer barriers. In drawing these authors’ barriers together this research offers three separate but aligned moderating variables (MV1, MV2 and MV3) for learning transfer investigation that are supported by theory. These theories are presented in Chapter 3 as supporting this study’s research design. A review of the literature in Chapter 2 assisted in forming an appropriate organisational research direction for this study and identified factors within each of the moderating variables designed to address questions unanswered by extant literature.

Described in Chapter 3 is this study’s research design and the methodological approach for investigating this social organisational phenomenon. Chapter 3 outlines a naturalistic methodology and defines the qualitative processes used for this research inquiry. The qualitative processes used for developing semi-structured interview questions and the methods used for deeply investigating issues of intrinsic and extrinsic influence that enable or limit the learning transfer process within organisations are outlined in Chapter 3.

The research design presented in Chapter 3 details how activity theory and activity system theory have been applied to this research and how further theories and models have guided the research. These theories and models, the adapted 3P model of teaching and learning (Biggs 2005), the accountability pyramid (Schlenker et al. 1994) and the theory of planned behaviour (TpB) (Ajzen 1991) provided research structure supported by literature for the research design. These
Theories and models presented support this study's identification and selection of the three overarching moderating variables (MV1, MV2 and MV3). These three moderating variables were used to interrogate the research problem via an adapted activity system analytical framework. This interrogation was drawn from Mwanza's (2002) notational structure for question forming that included a method of informing data collection and the alignment of data analysis specifically developed for an activity system analytical framework. Mwanza's question development structure was retained, however Mwanza's notational structure and 8-step process were adapted to an aligned notational structure and a nine-step process for this learning transfer research. The interview question forming process presented in Chapter 3 includes the following procedures for investigating learning transfer issues within organisations:

- Using a nine-step mapping process for early phase activity system design, this researcher identified the direction, language and situated contradictions within an activity system analytical framework that influenced an organisational learner's (the subject) ability to transfer their learning (the object).

- With the activity system design identified, this study adapted Mwanza's (2002) notational structure with sub-activity triangles aligned to the direction, language and situated contradictions of this research.

- The sub-activity triangles of the activity system analytical framework therefore provided indicators used as a guide for question development within context.

- With these three procedures in place, the process for collecting interview data specifically aligned to the first research objective emerged. Following data collection, these procedures enabled initial alignment and coding of research data for analysis.

Emerging from the analysis of data presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 were themes that provided further understanding into barriers to learning transfer. From the perspective of an employee's professional development training and the
relationship between the employee and their ability to transfer and apply their workplace learning, results provided insights into the reported low organisational learning transfer rates. The analysis of primary data and emergent results are presented in three chapters: Chapter 4 moderating variable 1 (MV1), Chapter 5 moderating variable 2 (MV2) and Chapter 6 moderating variable 3 (MV3). MV1 explored the organisational learning environment, MV2 investigated the influence of organisational stakeholders and MV3 reported on the actions of the organisation, learning and development professionals, managers and individuals that influenced learning transfer. Research results from the analysis of data are detailed within Chapter 4, 5 and 6. Outcomes from emergent results are linked to literature identified in Chapter 2. These links provided both support for this study's emergent results and in some instances challenged the literature.

Chapter 7 outlines the key research results presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 (MV1, MV2 and MV3), identified the interrelationships arising within the results between the three moderating variables and argued the suitability of an activity system analytical framework as a research instrument or diagnostic. A discussion of the key results and the study conclusions that include research contributions to practice and knowledge are offered in Chapter 7, as are limitations, implications and recommendations for further research.

In summary, this study's key conclusions in Chapter 7, from the exploration of factors influencing organisational learning transfer, suggests the introduction or extension and implementation of a well-defined learning process within an organisation that managers and the senior leadership team supported and were accountable for would assist in enabling effective learning transfer. This study's results recommended that for an organisational learning process to be effective in producing a positive learning transfer climate, three factors should be considered:

- Organisational environment: The alignment of learning to personal and professional needs, an open communication between managers and their direct reports, the articulation of training value to individuals and to the organisation and the identification of explicit and aligned organisational objectives
• Organisational stakeholders: The stakeholder ownership of and accountability for learning within a supportive manager environment, which provided employees with learning support, follow up and coaching would assist in effectively improving learning transfer

• Organisational actions: The development of processes that improved employee learning motivation, positive organisational and managerial actions that supported and assisted employees to effectively transfer their learning and enable practices that led to the successful implementation and application of new learning.

Supported by the research results, these conclusions identified that a structured process for the effective improvement of organisational learning transfer was possible.

Results further acknowledged the three moderating variables (MV1, MV2 and MV3) of the research instrument (including the mini-scale factors within each of the moderating variables) were overarching learning transfer factors capable of providing a large impact on improving low transfer rates. This study recommends the use of these three overarching moderating variables when investigating issues of learning transfer within organisations.

In Chapter 2 organisational learning transfer literature is reviewed, supporting theories and models are proposed and barriers to learning transfer are discussed. Chapter 2 is divided into four areas, discussing literature on:

• Responsibility for learning transfer and barriers to learning transfer within an organisational context

• Organisational environment (this study’s moderating variable 1 – MV1) including organisational culture over learning transfer, the value and need for alignment of learning and the organisational processes for learning

• Organisational stakeholders (this study’s moderating variable 2 – MV2) and the influence and relevance of organisational learning ownership, accountability and support for learning
- Organisational actions (this study's moderating variable 3 – MV3) that created a learning transfer climate, learner motivation and the control organisational learner's possessed over transferring and applying their new learning.
CHAPTER TWO
Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The importance of organisational learning transfer was epitomised in a speech by Jack Welch, CEO of GE, in which he suggested "an organization's ability to learn and translate that learning into action is the ultimate competitive advantage" (Welch 1997, par. 9).

Literature on barriers that enabled or limited learning transfer, the influence of these barriers within an organisational context, the processes for learning transfer and the guidance and actions of organisational stakeholders provided this researcher with a platform for investigating organisational learning transfer and the application of workplace learning.

To refine and offer clarity for the reader, table 2.1 below outlines this chapter's sub-headings, aligns them with influential authors and identifies each author's relationships with concepts, models and literature.
The Wilson Learning Worldwide Report (2009) identified only 15 to 20 percent of learning investments organisations outlaid actually resulted in work performance change. Maximising learning transfer results enhanced the application of learning and was defined as learning outcomes that may be displayed as new skills, knowledge or understanding by employee or as knowledge that was incorporated into organisational culture, systems and management (Silverman 2003).

Workplace learning plays a key role in organisational productivity and effectiveness (Miller 2003). Workplace learning is categorised as either on-the-job
training or formal learning through organised learning events or as on-the-job learning, or more informal learning, through personal interactions and everyday work experiences (Silverman 2003). Organisations that emphasised a continuous workplace learning approach were supporting their long-term competitive advantage and viewed workplace learning as a means by which their organisations could achieve not only short-term objectives but also longer-term strategic goals (Silverman 2003). Knowledge and learning are the new strategic assets of an organisation (Miller 2003).

Baldwin and Ford (1988) suggested learning transfer was seen as a function of the work environment and learning design, the individual’s characteristics that included ability, personality and motivation, the support a learner received and the opportunity to apply learned material. Supporting and adding to these functions were three constructs that organisations must concern themselves with when exploring learning transfer; the workplace environment, the learning process and the learning activity (Taylor, Russ-Eft & Chan 2005).

Learning transfer research into influences and variables that mediated learning transfer in organisations is extensive (Alvarez, Salas & Garofano 2004; Baldwin & Ford 1988; Burke & Hutchins 2007; Burke & Saks 2009; Ford & Weissbein 1997; Georgenson 1982; Holton, Bates & Ruona 2000; Salas et al. 1999; Yamnill & McLean 2001). The impact of training industry estimates of annual corporate learning expenditure versus the continued low learning transfer rates reported in literature warranted further investigation.

Studies conducted in the area of organisational learning environment and culture have focused on identifying the cultural dimensions that affected knowledge management (Wang & Noe 2010). Further research was needed to understand how an organisational learning culture was able to be promoted and how such a learning culture affected the dynamics of knowledge sharing and learning among employees and teams (Wang & Noe 2010).

Drawing from the speech by Jack Welch (1997) and the reported low learning transfer rates (Holton 2012) this researcher was intrigued to explore the dynamics
of organisational learning and whether organisations were optimising their competitive advantage through learning transfer.

### 2.2 Responsibility for learning transfer

Inconsistencies appear within literature on who was responsible for organisational learning transfer; the learner, facilitator or trainer or the learner’s supervisor or manager (Brockett & Hiemstra 1991; Candy 1988; Esque & McCausland 1997; Houle 1993; Kohns & Ponton 2006; Kopp 2006; Steiner 1998).

Steiner (1998) offered that people are individuals even though they work in groups within organisations and to establish individual, group and organisational learning one must start by focusing on the individual’s abilities. Candy (1988) suggested learners take most, if not all, responsibility for their own learning. Houle (1993) supported this view and proposed that the individual learner should always assume the responsibility for his or her own learning transfer. Kohns and Ponton (2006) responded and suggested:

> “If this assessment was correct one would expect a great deal of theoretical and empirical research on the topic of personal responsibility throughout the years. In fact, this is not what has occurred” (Kohns & Ponton 2006, p. 17).

Kopp (2006) held the facilitator or trainer of learning primarily responsible and suggested the facilitator had the power over learning design, delivery of content and the training environment. Esque and McCausland (1997) recommended that when investigating who was responsible for learning transfer all stakeholders take some degree of accountability however managers should accept the ultimate responsibility:

> “Ultimately management is responsible for learning transfer, however noting that responsibility for effective transfer of learning falls into the grey area between trainer, trainees and management” (Esque & McCausland 1997, p. 116).

Research that investigated organisational responsibility would offer useful implications for managers into how different forms of internal organisational learning communities operated (Wu & Eweje 2008). Future research into the
responsibility for organisational learning support and the influence and accountability of stakeholders may provide insights into learning transfer (Brockett & Hiemstra 1991). These increased perceptions of responsibility would be able to assist in facilitating improved learning transfer (Kohns & Ponton 2006).

A study into assessing perceived organisational support for training suggested future research that investigated the effects and outcomes of training would benefit from two key tangents. These included identifying perceived organisational learning support and the measurement of more distal effects, for example organisational commitment to training, retention of learning and leadership behaviours (Mullen et al. 2006).

Perhaps managers did not know how to hold their employees accountable for learning transfer or perhaps employees, supervisors and trainers did not want to shoulder the responsibility (Burke & Saks 2009). Employees, supervisors and trainers however all should have some responsibility for learning transfer (Burke & Saks 2009).

2.3 Barriers to learning transfer

Managers and supervisors played a critical role as learning transfer agents when they use their managerial skills and abilities that supported and influenced employee learning transfer, helped training generate the outcomes for which it was intended and therefore enhanced the return on investment (ROI) for the organisation (Bates 2003). Learning transfer barriers were worthy of attention as their existence provided an explanation for some of the resistance to and issues around organisational learning (Goold 2006).

Barriers to learning transfer and to the application of workplace learning occurred before, during and after a learning intervention (Broad & Newstrom 1992). Organisations needed to identify, recognise and work with barriers to organisational learning in order to release the energy vital in unlocking workplace learning and the potential benefits it brought (Goold 2006).

Learning transfer barriers implied an individual or organisational obstacle or as something that needed to be overcome, however barriers could also be seen as
organisational potential and therefore energy to be released (Goold 2006). This released potential required improving learning processes within organisations and the creative destruction of barriers to learning transfer (Starkey 1996). Barriers to learning transfer occurred however, as a result of managerial efforts to implement new ideologies that were not accepted, communicated or understood by employees (Steiner 1998). Engestrom (1993) believed that the identification of learning transfer barriers was achieved by balancing activity tension systems, isolating how they are energised and under what situations and conditions were barriers allowed to continue, grow and evolve. Energy that unlocked stakeholders to engage and take ownership of learning transfer suggested an increase in stakeholder accountability (Goold 2006).

When investigating issues of learning transfer, many of the variables identified in learning transfer models were perhaps trivial or of minor importance in affecting significant change in learning transfer (Burke & Saks 2009). A mere handful therefore of those numerous learning transfer influences, by themselves, could have a large impact on improving low transfer rates (Burke & Saks 2009). To identify these highly influential learning transfer barriers, a wide range of learning transfer studies and models have been explored and are discussed.

### 2.3.1 Learning transfer studies

A study into organisational dilemmas as barriers to learning transfer identified and concluded three influential factors as barriers to organisational learning (Steiner 1998). These barriers were organisational structure, the individual and the flow-group and managerial actions (Steiner 1998). Steiner’s work aligned with the influencing learning transfer factors of Baldwin and Ford (1988) and that of Taylor, Russ-Eft and Chan (2005). Steiner in addition to Taylor, Russ-Eft et al. and Baldwin & Ford suggested applying these learning transfer factors enabled exploration of a learner’s journey in attempting to transfer and apply their new learning.
2.3.2 The Goold study

In Goold’s qualitative enquiry of 290 non-government organisations in the United Kingdom, working with barriers to organisational learning were investigated. The study identified 10 barriers to organisational learning (Goold 2006) (see table 2.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goold’s Barriers To Organisational Learning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bias for action</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presence of undiscussables [sic]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commitment to the cause</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural biases</td>
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<td>Advocacy at the expense of inquiry</td>
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<td>The role of leadership and power</td>
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<td>Learning to unlearn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practice what we preach</td>
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<tr>
<td>The funding environment</td>
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<td>Thinking strategically about learning</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2: Goold’s Barriers to Organisational Learning consolidated in table format by Author: Source: Goold. L 2006, p. 1-12.

Researchers formulated a research problem and specified some potentially important variables in reference to the extant literature (Eisenhardt 1989b). Goold’s 10 barriers to learning transfer, in the table above, aligned and supported the three influential factors of learning transfer identified by Steiner (1998), Taylor, Russ-Eft et al. (2005), and Baldwin and Ford (1988). The alignment of these authors’ influencing learning transfer factors with this study’s research objectives have been outlined in Chapter 3 and how these model variables have supported and informed this study’s research design.
2.4 Exploring Learning Transfer within organisations

2.4.1 Introduction
Organisational theory studies provide an interdisciplinary focus on several key factors: firstly, the effect of social organisations on the behaviour and attitudes of individuals within them; secondly, the effects of individual characteristics and action on the organisation; and thirdly, the mutual effects of the organisational environment (Pfeffer 1997). Pfeffer proposed that within an organisation, individuals were influenced by their environment, their interactions with other members and the actions of those members. These three factors suggested when an individual attempted to transfer and apply their new learning their efforts were mediated by both intrinsic and extrinsic organisational influences.

Workplace learning transfer was defined by Burke and Hutchins (2007) as the application of trained knowledge and skills on the job. This broad definition was a consistent theme in the literature and suggested the act of learning transfer occurred whenever prior knowledge or skills were affected by the way in which the new knowledge and skills were learned and then an action was performed using that new knowledge (Broad & Newstrom 1992; Cormier & Hagman 1997).

A learner’s behaviour change and the transfer of new learning did not always occur as a result of learning (Olsen & Hergenhahn 2009). This statement implied the act of learning and the action of learning transfer are not consistently linked processes. Emerging themes in the learning transfer literature indicated the action of learning was influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic factors and these factors mediated a learner’s ability to transfer their learning.

Baldwin and Ford (1988) identified several factors that influenced the process of learning transfer as discussed previously in this chapter. The factors were analogous to Steiner (1998), Goold (2006) and Pfeffer (1997). Caffarella (2001) supported these similar parallels and defined five influencing intrinsic and extrinsic factors for successful learning transfer:

- The organisational environment: how the learning was influenced by the organisational environment
• The learning design: how and under what organisational influences was the
  learning structured

• The learning content: how development of the learning content and
delivery of the learning provided by the influential stakeholders (subject
matter experts, facilitators or content developers) influenced the learner

• The perceptions of individual adult learners: the motivations, actions and
  perceptions of the learner that enabled learning transfer

• The changes required to facilitate learning application: the actions of
  managers that mediated a learner's ability to transfer learning.

Caffarella (2001) and the four theorists identified above suggested three
influential barriers; organisational environment, interactions with other
organisational members and the actions of those members. These three
overarching barriers influenced learning transfer: firstly, by the organisational
learning structure (organisational environment); secondly, by the influence of
stakeholders (organisational stakeholders); and thirdly, by the actions of
individuals and managers (organisational actions). This chapter now presents and
discusses literature on each of these three overarching barriers to learning
transfer, commencing with organisational environment.

Supporting the identification of these three variables, a micro-analysis of factors
that influenced the transfer of learning and how these factors compared or differed
with those posited within the wider training literature formed the basis of a study
by Clarke (2002). Conclusions suggested workplace factors relating to job and
work environments influenced learning transfer; a heavy workload, time
pressures, lack of reinforcement of training and the absence of feedback on
performance (Clarke 2002). These factors were considered during the
development of this study's first mediating variable organisational environment
(MV1) within the research design is presented in Chapter 3, with MV1 analysis and
results outlined in Chapter 4.
2.5 Organisational environment

2.5.1 Introduction
Organisations must concern themselves with the learning process, the workplace environment as a learning context and the application by learners of new knowledge and skills gained through learning activities (Taylor, Russ-Eft & Chan 2005).

An organisational learning environment could have practical implications and contribute not only to formal knowledge that influences behaviours but also to the design of the social situations, domains and culture that optimise an individual's development, performance and well-being (Ryan & Deci 2000b). Managements’ efforts that created a supportive learning organisation were an effort to establish a corporate learning ideology (Steiner 1998). This implied the organisational environment and the design of organisational learning, aligned to key organisational strategies, was important and generated successful corporate transformation.

The failure of training to penetrate as far as a behaviour change in the workplace was a result of skills not being taught on training programs to the extent that participants were not able to transfer their learning. (Reid, Parsons & Green 1989). This suggested inhibiting conditions within the workplace that prevented learning transfer.

Guiding a learner's progress toward the desired learning objectives using meaningful learning design was essential and the prime motivation for instructional designers and facilitators (Biggs 2003). Biggs further suggested using learning design that aligned learning to individual and organisational outcomes assisted learners to transfer and apply new learning into the workplace.

Biggs's adapted 3P model of teaching and learning that highlighted influences on the learning environment, included Reid's (1987) term ‘institutional constraints’. These institutional constraints [constraints over the organisational learning environment] created barriers to learning transfer and the application of learning (Biggs 2005).
2.5.2 Organisational learning culture

Social and psychological studies of organisational culture and climate were frequently indistinguishable (Ouchi & Wilkins 1995). Organisational culture differed from organisational climate in that culture referred to common beliefs, values and assumptions of organisational members that were shared organisation-wide (Kopelman, Brief & Guzzo 1990). Organisational climate developed from an employee’s psychological state that was affected by organisational conditions, for example the organisational culture, the organisational environment or managerial influences (Bates & Khasawneh 2005). Organisational climate emerged from an individual’s perception of what was important and influential to them in the workplace (Schneider & Rentsch 1988). The organisational climate, whilst influenced by the organisational environment, represented the way in which employee’s interacted with and responded to their workplace (Kopelman, Brief & Guzzo 1990). Organisational learning climate has been more commonly addressed within the area of the organisational environment (Ouchi & Wilkins 1995). Within the context of this study however, the actions of the organisation and managers that influenced learning transfer developed an employee’s learning transfer climate and is therefore discussed within organisational actions (see section 2.7) further in this chapter.

Organisational culture or the common beliefs, values, and assumptions of organisational members that have built up over time and were shared organisation-wide are commonly identified as the organisation’s history (Sydow, Schreyogg & Koch 2005). Organisational history and therefore organisational culture was important when attempting to alter the social processes through change within organisations (Sydow, Schreyogg & Koch 2005).

Literature on the relationship between organisational culture and variables such as learning and development within human relations management practices has provided considerable interest although the general focus has been on human relations management as a mediator of culture rather than the reverse (Bunch 2007). Franklin and Pagan (2006) suggested that employees relied on the cultural cues of their organisation to determine the importance of training and therefore organisational culture influenced organisational learning and development.
Individuals and groups learn organisational culture as they encounter, work through and resolve problems and challenges (Schein 1990). Schon (1973) suggested organisations were characterised by dynamic conservatism that was seen as a tendency to fight to remain unchanged. Schon further posits that organisational learning created a platform for change and uniquely threatened the dynamic conservatism of organisations and therefore culture.

Argyris' collaboration with Schon explored the behaviour, reflective practices and culture of the learning organisation. Argyris and Schon (1994) argued that uncorrected dynamic conservatism behaviour locked-in organisations toward single-loop-learning and limited improvements in organisational practices and suggested resistance to change was therefore a feature of the organisational culture.

Organisations created habitual routine patterns of behaviour that locked the organisation to a chosen path that limited change and growth (Argyris 1976). Within these patterns of locked behaviour, organisational theories emphasised the role of an individual's cognitive schemas that channelled influence and reinforced future managerial actions (Sydow, Schreyogg & Koch 2005). These habitual routine actions shaped future organisational decision-making processes and eventually created barriers that inhibit organisational inertia (Sydow, Schreyogg & Koch 2005). This highlighted a causal influence as to why following training a trainee resisted change and therefore failed to alter past behaviours.

An influential layer of organisational culture and the most elusive to identify was subconscious assumptions (Bunch 2007). Assumptions that perhaps began as values were confirmed through experience until they are taken for granted (Schein 1984). As a consequence it was often difficult to identify assumptions because even individuals holding them were not mindful of their existence (Rousseau 1990). Little recognition existed of these entrenched values, beliefs and assumptions of the organisation, which prevented effective learning transfer and application (Bunch 2007).
2.5.3 Organisational process of learning design

Effective learning design was where learning was presented, built on and confirmed in small amounts and was therefore reinforced (Skinner 1954). Bruner (1960) supported Skinner’s view and suggested it was the role of structure in learning rather than simply the mastery of facts and techniques that was at the centre of the classic problem of the application of learning. Conway (1997) concurred with the ideas of Skinner and Bruner and commented that the building of learning processes and structures introspectively affected a learner’s ability to construct, built on and transformed learning into application and was a design for learning.

It was not until the early 1980’s that interest turned to the characteristics of and influences on instructional design where disciplines were being sought not only for knowledge users but also for knowledge producers (Reigeluth 1999). Instructional theories began to develop as practical solutions to the instructional process of learning design and to the alignment of learning outcomes (Reigeluth 1999). This allowed instructional design techniques to evolve into multi-faceted constructs within learning design that embraced inputs such as a learner’s prior knowledge, aligned objectives, activities and assessments (Mattiske 2008).

Organisational learning design or instructional design involved identifying the individual and organisational learning needs and outcomes (Mattiske 2009). Instructional design comprised four components (Mattiske 2008):

- A process for evaluating learner motivation and organisational support
- A process of instructional development
- A method for balancing a learners’ learning preferences
- A process for learner transfer.

Sound instructional design processes were critical to learning success and learning retention (Mattiske 2008). The instructional design process dictated the flow of the learning intervention and if structured effectively ensured the learner achieved the potential for effective learning transfer in line with identified organisational
learning objectives (Mattiske 2009). Instructional design techniques were expressed as tasks that involved developing mediating variables that had direct influence over the learning process (Barab, Evans & Baek 2004).

Individual learning factors were influenced by effective learning design and if instructional designers identified the nature and strength of an individual's beliefs, motivation and the level of perceived behavioural control, the task of facilitation and enabling learning transfer became easier (Ajzen 2002).

Strategic alignment of learning consisted of motives, strategies and approaches where approaches to learning were defined as a particular motive for learning that was associated with a congruent organisational strategy (Biggs 1987). Biggs further offered when learners chose an approach to learning, they constructed their personal approach from prior experiences, extrinsic influences and from their environment.

Unfocussed learning design and non-aligned learning objectives reduced a learner’s motivation and were key factors that impede learning transfer (Kemerer 1991). Learning facilitators and instructional designers that recognised the value of linking prior knowledge to new knowledge were encouraging intrinsic motivation and therefore promoted a more active and volitional form of intrinsic motivation (Ajzen 2002).

Intrinsic motivation techniques therefore provided learners with a platform for a meaningful, deep learning experience. When designing and introducing new learning or knowledge, the use of deep learning principles in adult learning supported both motivation and a higher retention rate when linked to an individual’s prior knowledge, values, concepts and principles (Walsh 2007).

When a learning design approach was developed, where the aims and outcomes from learning were clearly stated and the inclusion of prior knowledge, activities and assessments that were aligned to desired outcomes, enabled and encouraged a richer deep learning approach (Walsh 2007).

Constructive alignment is a design process for learning calculated to encourage a deep learning focus (Biggs 2003). Biggs’ 3P model of teaching and learning (see
figure 2.1) identified three influential factors of learning, presage, process and product that supported the constructive alignment of learning (Biggs 2003).

In highlighting the presage stage, Biggs (2003) recommended this phase would take place prior to training and denoted aspects of what was to be facilitated and how the learning intervention would be designed and assessed. Within the presage stage, Biggs (2003) proposed the factors of a learner's prior knowledge, a learner's ability and learning style, together with the inclusion of learning objectives, learning assessments and issues relating to the learning environment were essential factors of learning that provided a guide for effective learning and aligned instruction.

When designing learning the use of deep learning promoted understanding and was an approach that encouraged a behaviour change and the application of learning (Marton & Saljo 1984). Surface, deep and achieving learning are three common approaches to learning that are not personality traits but the reactions of learners to the learning environment (Biggs 1999). Walsh (2007) supported Biggs's approach and suggested by applying a deep learning approach toward integrating new information with existing knowledge, instructional designers were designing learning that focussed on learning content understanding. A learner that was driven by extrinsic motivation was applying a surface learning approach. In this approach the learner’s objective was the short term memorising of details and
facts rather than long term retention of knowledge [a deep learning approach] (Entwistle 2004). While at any given time the surface and deep approaches were mutually exclusive, an achieving approach however may be linked to either (Biggs 1987). Surface-achievers may systematically learn selected details by memorisation to obtain their objective, whereas deep-achievers were organised and planned their learning for both meaning and reaching their objectives.

Constructive alignment was developed as a design for instruction calculated to encourage meaningful and deep learning (Walsh 2007). Although deep learning was the guiding principle for Biggs’ theory of constructive alignment, Biggs suggested learning alignment was an approach that supported desired organisational learning outcomes (Biggs 2003). Aligned learning maximised the likelihood learners engaged in the activities designed to achieve the intended learning outcomes (Biggs 2003).

More recently however, a study of factors influencing learning transfer concluded that beyond the traditional factors of learning design and delivery and the workplace environment, the influencing elements of organisational characteristics and the perceptions of the value of training needed to be considered (Burke & Hutchins 2008).

2.5.4 Organisational learning measurement and assessment
Organisations were becoming increasingly aware of the need to identify learning value and measure both tangible and intangible results from a learning intervention (Bersin 2002; McLinden 1998). In order to provide these results, a learning intervention needed to produce measured value and prove that it was aligned with and in support of identified strategic corporate goals (Bersin 2002; McLinden & Trochim 1998). The issue of identifying organisational learning value aligned to individual and organisational needs, goals and outcomes was an essential task when demonstrating the value of learning value to management (Ketter 2009):

"Measuring the value of learning and development has been a critical issue in the field for a very long time and to help corporate learning maintain credibility learning executives must think about results, measures, metrics and analytics when designing and
delivering workplace training programs. It is time to start delivering the data that executives demand, because if you fail to prove value, learning programs may be perceived as a waste of time and money. It is critical that corporate learning professionals know what to measure, how to measure it and how to present the results of learning to the organisation” (Ketter 2009, p. 10).

The assessment of the organisational learning transfer process has been defined as the educational component of the economic search for the return on training investment (Taylor, Russ-Eft & Chan 2005). For workplace learning to be legitimised in the eyes of senior management and therefore be continually supported a return of investment (ROI) must be realised (Miller 2003). This required some form of measurement of outcomes that were able to be related to the organisation’s strategic plan (Miller 2003).

Measuring learning and qualifying its benefits was possible yet complex (Hager 1997). The majority of organisations would not know if new knowledge from training had been actually applied in the workplace or of what value the behaviour change had benefited the organisation (Conner 2002). Quantitative measures that consisted of hard numbers showing effects on the bottom line were preferred by most senior managers but a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures provided a more complete picture of the results (Miller 2003).

Kirkpatrick’s Four Levels of Evaluation has been the classic method of evaluating learning used by practitioners in the field for several decades (Newstrom 1995). Research was needed on how to improve upon Kirkpatrick’s four levels (Newstrom 1995). The Learning Transfer System Inventory (LTSI) and the subsequent HRD Evaluation and Research Model offered this improvement as a more comprehensive framework for diagnosing and understanding the causal influences upon learning transfer and, in particular, learning transfer outcomes (Holton 2005).

2.5.4.1 LTSI Diagnostic and HRD Evaluation and Research Model
The LTSI suggested nine constructs that supported the identification of organisational learning transfer climate issues (Holton et al. 1997). These nine constructs were supervisor support, opportunity to use, peer support, supervisor
sanctions, positive personal outcomes, negative personal outcomes, group or team resistance, content validity and transfer design. The three outcomes of the LTSI diagnostic were learning, individual performance and organisational performance (Holton et al. 1997). These LTSI constructs were supplemented by a further seven constructs in 2000 that resulted in what Devos et al. (2007) described as the only validated predictive analysis tool of an organisational learning transfer climate.

An updated LTSI diagnostic was developed in 2005, renamed the Revised HRD Evaluation and Research Model, and added previously omitted factors of: secondary constructs; learner abilities; and the learning environment (Holton 2005). These constructs, abilities and factors included personality traits, locus of control, job attitudes, organisational commitment, learning design, the linkages to organisational goals, individual perceptions and behavioural intentions and extrinsic influences (Holton 2005).

Holton et al. (1997) speculated that instead of using the LTSI in its entirety a simplified, valid and reliable diagnostic for investigating learning transfer would be able to assist organisations identify dimensions of the workplace that affected the use of learned knowledge and skills. Holton et al. (1997) believed this simplified approach offered an equally complete conceptual framework of organisational and training effectiveness. It was recommended that future studies design a shortened version of the LTSI questionnaire that considered mini-scales investigating the mediation effects between learning transfer constructs (Devos et al. 2007).

The second overarching factor influencing learning transfer identified in the literature was the influence of stakeholders (organisational stakeholders) and is now presented. A further discussion of authors, theories and models that provided support for this study's research design and second moderating variable of learning transfer (MV2) is offered in Chapter 3, with analysis and results of MV2 outlined in Chapter 5.
2.6 Organisational stakeholders

2.6.1 Introduction
Organisations cannot wait until after a learning intervention to address the learning transfer and application of learning issue (Broad & Newstrom 1992). The proactive involvement of organisational stakeholders improved the learning environment and served to reduce organisational constraints and application barriers (Harrison & St John 1997). Effective stakeholder engagement produced tangible and valuable results all of which generated competitive advantage for an organisation (Sloan 2007).

Identifying the impact of influential stakeholders over organisational factors and organisational constraints that created barriers was essential before, during and after learning (Harrison & St John 1997). Burke and Saks (2009) maintained this argument and suggested stakeholders influenced the transfer of learning into the workplace.

2.6.2 Defining organisational stakeholders
Stakeholder influence occurred when a stakeholder made another individual behave in ways that they would not otherwise do (Dahl 1957). The Stanford Research Institute defined stakeholders as those groups without whose support the organisation would cease to exist (Jennings 1999). This definition can be expressed as the narrow view of organisational stakeholders, however the broader view of organisational stakeholders was any group or individual who could have an effect on or be affected by the achievement of the organisations objectives (Freeman 1984).

Organisational stakeholders are further categorised in two ways; claimant and influencer (Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997). Claimant stakeholders were viewed as those having high attributes of legal or moral legitimacy and therefore take the legal or moral view of the organisation. Influencer stakeholders were viewed as having the ability and power that influenced the organisation and attributed project urgency (Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997).

Influencer stakeholders are described as the economic strategic stakeholder approach (Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997). Freeman’s broader view of stakeholders
supported strategic management considerations (Greenwood 2007) and was therefore more in line with the influencer definition. Organisations with a strategic approach to stakeholders had an opportunity to enhance stakeholder cooperation and performance that resulted in achieving the desired outcomes (Greenwood & Uhlenbruch 2007). Within the context of this study the influence of organisational stakeholders over learning transfer was explored and therefore aligned with Freeman’s (1984) broader view and Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997) influencer definition of organisational stakeholders.

2.6.3 **Principles and importance of organisational stakeholder engagement**

An evolution of the approaches to stakeholder management has occurred (Wu & Eweje 2008). Wu and Eweje proposed that the traditional approach of stakeholder management that focused on risk managing the stakeholders and controlled stakeholder communications has changed toward a more proactive stakeholder management approach, that of stakeholder engagement. The three main principles for successful stakeholder engagement were efficiency, inclusive transparency and effectiveness (Danev 2010) and are defined below.

2.6.3.1 **Stakeholder engagement efficiency**

To have stakeholder engagement efficiency was to have a clear, well-designed set of procedures and a stakeholder engagement plan for informing, consultation and the active participation of stakeholders in decision-making (Danev 2010). Stakeholder engagement was therefore understood as the practices the organisation undertook that involved stakeholders in a positive manner through organisational activities and therefore was a process of consultation, communication, dialogue and exchange (Greenwood 2007).

Stakeholder engagement processes were designed to act as sensing mechanisms to capture information about the interests and expectations of stakeholders (Sloan 2007). A stakeholder engagement approach provided for conciliation and controls, critical resources such as financial capital, knowledge, skills and corporate reputation needed for an organisation’s success and sustainability (Sloan 2007).
The dynamic balance between the needs, interests and value to stakeholders created the foundation for successful stakeholder engagement (Nickols 2005). With higher stakeholder engagement greater ownership resulted and therefore was a foundation for the successful transfer of learning (Nickols 2005). Nickols pointed out however, there was little need in viewing everyone as a stakeholder and not every stakeholder was of equal influence from endeavour to endeavour.

2.6.3.2 Stakeholder engagement inclusiveness and transparency

To have stakeholder engagement inclusiveness and transparency was to have an open and transparent engagement process with the proper selection of key stakeholders (Danev 2010). Identifying appropriate stakeholders and their perceived influence was fundamental in developing cooperative ownership of an organisational learning event and when stakeholders put something in they expected something greater in value in return (Neely, Adams & Crowe 2001). Managers that fund organisational learning did so in the hope of a positive effect on individual and organisational performance through reduced costs, increased productivity or other valued metric (Nickols 2005).

Identifying appropriate stakeholders required analysis (Harrison & St John 1997). Stakeholder analysis referred to activities such as the identification and prioritising of stakeholder needs and collating and interpreting their ideas (Harrison & St John 1997). Stakeholder analysis added value to the strategic management process and in essence defined how an organisation acknowledged its stakeholders and their influence (Harrison & St John 1997). The process of stakeholder engagement occurred after analysis and referred to the communication, the negotiation and the management of relationships with stakeholders that motivated them to behave in ways that were beneficial to the organisation (Harrison & St John 1997).

The likelihood of influential stakeholders holding differing views was high. These views posed risks to a project and required compromise at the risk of alienating other stakeholders and potentially added further time and costs to the project (Collins & Kearins 2007). This suggested addressing any issues of stakeholder self-interest that may arise where the impact or outcome of the learning intervention
affected a stakeholder’s personal short or long-term ambitions or objectives was essential.

2.6.3.3 Stakeholder engagement effectiveness
To have stakeholder engagement effectiveness was to have the stakeholder’s view taken into account and thus provided a real impact on planning development and implementation (Danev 2010). An approach to stakeholder engagement therefore implied an emphasis on building stakeholder relationships (Harrison & St John 1997). Collins and Kearins (2007) corroborated this emphasis and reported organisational perspectives on stakeholders had moved away from stakeholders being micro-managed to a more network-based, relational and process-oriented view of stakeholder engagement. Organisations that reviewed their perspective on stakeholder management and employed stakeholder engagement practices provided a platform for sustainability (Collins & Kearins 2007).

The potential corporate benefit from a stakeholder engagement approach is enhanced business legitimacy that fostered joint working relationships, promoted corporate learning and stimulated competitive imagination (Collins & Kearins 2007). Organisations that emphasised stakeholder engagement benefited from including stakeholders proactively (Andriof & Waddock 2002).

Despite the acknowledged importance of stakeholder engagement, there was no common understanding of what stakeholder engagement meant or of the characteristics of effective engagement (Sloan 2007). Sloan posits that an arm’s length or third party communication with organisational stakeholders was no longer enough. Rather collaboration, learning and innovation formed a fundamental corporate transformation toward stakeholder engagement and was a strategy for the future (Sloan 2007).

2.6.4 Power of organisational stakeholders
The power and influence of stakeholders may be visible, invisible or hidden, however all stakeholders had the potential to control decisions that affected organisational policies and procedures (Vermeulen 2005). The ability to identify and understand the often hidden power and influence of various stakeholders was a critical skill for successful managers (Bourne & Walker 2005).
Effective managers considered stakeholders as assets contributing knowledge, insights and support in shaping a project brief as well as supporting its execution (Bourne & Walker 2005). Without attention to the needs and expectations of a diverse range of stakeholders, any corporate project was subject to questionable levels of success (Bourne & Walker 2005). Within the context of the power of organisational stakeholders and their accountability over learning transfer, Roome and Wijen (2006) suggested little consideration had been given to the influence of stakeholders that mediated an individual’s learning transfer:

“The literature on organisational engagement by companies and organisational learning gives little consideration to the power (or influence) of stakeholders to affect the process or content of organisational learning” (Roome & Wijen 2006, p. 1).

This raised important issues for organisations that sought to undertake learning initiatives and that future studies would have to take into account a more explicit view of the effects stakeholder power had over learning transfer (Roome & Wijen 2006).

2.6.5 Stakeholder context within organisational learning
Organisational stakeholder engagement practices existed in many areas of organisational activity including human resource management (Greenwood 2007). Greenwood proposed that within human resource management, stakeholder engagement may be seen either negatively (the less positive mechanisms of consent, control, cooperation and accountability) or positively (employee involvement and participation and as a method of enhanced trust) (Greenwood 2007).

External stakeholder engagement resulted in a mechanical process rather than that of a strategic focus (Sloan 2007). Organisations with an inward looking approach to stakeholder engagement were more concerned with gaining organisational opportunity and had therefore maintained a strategic focus (Sloan 2007). Employee learning produced a new priority as a result of strategically integrating stakeholder concerns (Sloan 2007). Organisational learning stakeholders included other trainees, trainees’ managers, training developers,
instructional designers, facilitators, training managers and relevant corporate managers (Nickols 2005).

2.6.6 Organisational stakeholder ownership and accountability

Accountability refers to individuals being answerable to audiences for performing up to certain prescribed standards thereby fulfilling obligations and duties (Schlenker et al. 1994). The implications to organisations of stakeholder accountability have surfaced in literature in the past three decades (Cummings & Anton 1990; Ferris et al. 2009; Frink & Klimoski 1998, 2004; Hall 2005; Kohns & Ponton 2006; Schlenker et al. 1994; Tetlock 1992).

The study of organisational accountability developed from researchers examining the area of corporate governance (Eisenhardt 1989a). Corporate governance refers to the structures and practices within organisations that attempt to regulate behaviour of managers and thereby the performance of the organisation (Hall 2005). Organisational accountability is important due to its link to key organisational variables such as motivation and performance (Hall 2005).

Managers held employees accountable by building accountability actions into their daily schedule, such as providing timely feedback and measuring progress toward goals (Haneberg 2012). Ownership on the other hand was not something that managers were able to demand; it is intrinsic rather than extrinsic like accountability and employees chose whether to own their work, their department’s goals and their organisation’s mission (Haneberg 2012):

“Managers need to create a work environment that improves the likelihood of high employee engagement and ownership. Employees choose to feel and display ownership. Managers can improve ownership by creating a workplace that is intrinsically motivating” (Haneberg 2012, p. 1).

A one-solution-fits-all approach to accountability is not possible (Blagescu, De Las Casas & Loyde 2005). Approaches differ between organisations, within organisations and depending on the issue, context and the stakeholders involved (Blagescu, De Las Casas & Loyde 2005). This exposed and supported links between the needs of the learner and the learner’s stakeholders (Schlenker et al.
that suggested enhanced stakeholder ownership of the learning promoted learning transfer.

Stakeholder accountability or responsibility was a relevant construct worthy of further research (Kohns & Ponton 2006). Although considered a key concept, Kohne and Ponton (2006) suggested accountability was generally implied and research in this area was lacking a consistent theoretical construct. In order to advance accountability theory in human resource management and more generally within organisations, more studies would be needed that examined accountability qualitatively using real employees in actual organisations (Frink & Klimoski 1998). Accountability has continued to bond individuals within social systems, therefore research in this area was required to address a variety of academic and societal concerns and objectives accountability influenced (Hall 2005). The need for multi-organisation studies on accountability presented a fertile ground for future research (Hall 2005).

2.6.6.1 Defining accountability and responsibility

Within the construct of organisational accountability, an understanding of the role of an individual’s responsibility would be useful. Schlenker, Britt, Pennington, Murphy and Doherty (1994) described responsibility as including three factors, a defined set of applicable instructions, an actor’s perceived identity and an actor’s connection and control over an event:

“Responsibility is described as a psychological adhesive that connects an actor to an event and to relevant prescriptions that should govern conduct. People are held responsible to the extent that a clear, well-defined set of prescriptions is applicable to an event (prescription-event link), the actor is perceived to be bound by the prescriptions by virtue of his or her identity (prescription-identity link) and the actor is connected to the event, especially by virtue of appearing to have personal control over it (identity-event link)” (Schlenker et al. 1994, p. 632).

Accountability is able to be defined as the extent to which one’s actions were evaluated by an external individual or group of individuals and from which an individual’s rewards or sanctions were identified (Ferris et al. 1995; Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997). Organisational accountability was seen as the internal pressure to
comply where an individual or group was aware of the need to meet some acceptable standard of behaviour (Ferris et al. 1995).

In addressing the issue of accountability this study has been informed, in part, by the Schlenker et al. (1994) accountability pyramid. The accountability pyramid’s term audience [looking down and appraising an individual’s expectations, roles and actions] in context to this investigation of learning transfer has been adapted to this study’s term organisational stakeholders (MV2). Within the context of this study, the terms accountability and responsibility have been referenced interchangeably.

2.6.6.2 Organisational accountable behaviours
Social systems or organisations in general are defined in terms of a common sets of shared expectations for behaviour and accountability at the root of viable social systems (Frink & Klimoski 2004). Accountability might also be thought of as the adhesive that binds the social systems together for without it there would be no capacity to compel individuals to answer for their actions (Tetlock 1992). The most fundamental principle of organisations was accountability and therefore holding employees answerable for their decisions, actions and behaviours (Ferris et al. 2009). Ferris et al. added despite the importance and critical nature of the accountability construct organisational scientists have only recently engaged in serious scholarship to better explicate the process and dynamics of accountability.

The notion of organisational accountability suggested individuals make assessments of the organisational standards and the applications of those standards then form strategies for coping with perceived and interpreted conditions (Tetlock 1992). Employees created these strategies in order to attain valued outcomes; outcomes that required the coordinated activities of many people who have a stake in the organisation and have their own roles, functions, perspectives and interests (Frink & Klimoski 2004). Within an organisation the required coordination of activities implied that there may be substantial overlap in the activities of those individuals or constituencies to whom one feels accountable (Frink & Klimoski 2004).
2.6.6.3  Management hierarchy and accountability

As an employee occupied jobs in higher levels of the organisational hierarchy there
are co-commitment increases in accountability however this relationship was
unclear (Ferris et al. 2009). A study of organisational accountability suggested that
accountability was associated with greater overall use of influence tactics, the
value of accountability and the influence of those efforts (Ferris et al. 2009). The
study concluded that a foundational element in an organisational system was
where people in the workplace were held accountable or answerable for their
decisions and actions. Yet the study admitted our understanding of accountability
antecedents, processes and outcomes was woefully deficient. Ferris et al. (2009)
speculated that recently have organisational scientists have begun to focus
attention on the identification of accountability constructs, their antecedents and
consequences.

Individuals seek conformity prior to making a decision and take issues of
organisational accountability into consideration when the audience was known to
them (Tetlock 1992). The opposite also occurred, where once committed to a
course of action individuals engaged in defence bolstering to justify their decision
(Tetlock 1992).

A report into managing organisational accountability suggested most
organisations practiced vertical accountability (Ray & Elder 2007). The report
identified managing accountability was via the chain of command which did little
to address the flow of communication and interaction between departments or
employees (Ray & Elder 2007). In contrast, horizontal accountability is defined as
the degree to which peers communicated across the organisation, problem solved
with all employees and teams, built accountability and created trust between
employees and management (Ray & Elder 2007).

A balance of organisational accountability was therefore needed; if not individuals
might resent increased accountability especially when it came in the form of
increased surveillance and performance monitoring (Enzel & Anderson 1996).
This resentment could be seen as leading to a decline in intrinsic motivation
(Lerner & Tetlock 1999) or even counter-productive work practices (Ferris et al. 1995).

Few studies have taken into consideration moderators of organisational accountability, instead have been limited to intrinsic examination of personality types, issues of individual and organisational performance and job opacity (Fandt & Ferris 1990; Ferris et al. 2009; Yarnold, Mueser & Lyons 1988). Although recent research has attempted to address this weakness in the literature (Ammeter et al. 2004; Hall, Blass & Ferris 2003) there is much to be learnt from further research in terms of individual perceptions as they are mediated by influencing extrinsic factors within the organisation (Hall 2005). This study explored this gap in the extant literature by investigating extrinsic moderators of organisational learning accountability and their influence over learning transfer.

2.6.7 Organisational and manager support

The issue of organisational support was highlighted by Newstrom (1986) who criticised organisations and suggested the lack of strong philosophical support for the goals of training and development programs was typical in many organisations. The most significant barrier to any workplace transfer of learning was the lack of reinforcement in supporting learning (Newstrom 1986). A study into the knowledge transfer paradigm concluded that supported workplace learning was a suitable knowledge transfer process in relation to updating organisational knowledge, which improved personal development and was the competitive strength of the organisation (Burns & Paton 2005).

The actions of managers supported learning or created barriers to learning transfer and therefore influenced the learning transfer climate (Goold 2006; Steiner 1998; Taylor, Russ-Eft & Chan 2005). The degree to which mentoring and coaching support occurred directly correlated to improved performance and positive outcomes (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick 2009). A paradox of today’s organisations was managers within organisations strived to achieve a strategic vision, prioritised organisational goals to meet objectives and believed that preparing and training employees to meet future challenges was important however did little themselves to actively support and mentor their employees.
through the learning process (Mattiske 2010). Supportive organisational learning environments required vertical integration and support where one succeeding management level reinforced the behaviours of subordinate levels (Caffarella 2001). This suggested the opposite also occurred where an unsupportive learning environment created barriers to learning transfer and therefore a poor learning transfer climate.

The third overarching factor influencing learning transfer was identified in the literature as the actions of individuals and managers (organisational actions - MV3) and is presented in the following section. A further discussion of authors, theories and models that provided support for this study’s research design and third moderating variable of learning transfer (MV3) is offered in Chapter 3, with analysis and results of MV3 outlined in Chapter 6.

2.7 Organisational actions

2.7.1 Motivation of the organisational learner
Motivation, self-efficacy [the learner’s belief of their ability and capacity to deal with tasks and challenges] and the expected value of outcomes were important factors that influenced human behaviour and therefore influenced actions (Nilsen 2009).

Learners that possess heightened self-efficacy had a more positive outlook toward completing a task where they believed they were able to succeed (Nilsen 2009). If a learner believed that the outcome of learning was easily attained and considered the process of achieving that outcome was within their ability, or was convinced by others that the learning outcome was achievable, then motivation and self-efficacy would be positive toward action (Bandara 1977).

A learner’s beliefs around their own abilities, motivation, self-efficacy, learning engagement, the perceived value of what was to be learnt and their intention to learn often dictated if a behaviour change would occur (Nilsen 2009). The perceived and expected value of an outcome highly influenced an individual’s motivation and if the perception was low an individual would be less motivated to
achieve where they perceived the outcome was of little value to them (Nilsen 2009).

When a learner experienced learning process clarity leading to the mastery of new learning it enhanced both motivation and self-efficacy to act on it (Bandara 1977). According to Ryan and Deci (2000a) learner motivation was both intrinsic and extrinsic and therefore identifying learner motivation and how it impacted learning transfer was crucial. Positive intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are products of an environment that fostered versus undermined positive human potentials (Ryan & Deci 2000b).

If instructional designers of learning identified the nature and strength of an individual’s beliefs, motivation and the level of perceived behavioural control the task of facilitating learning transfer became easier (Ajzen 2002). Learning application was verified once positive individual beliefs and motivation have been established, only then would the learner have a positive intention to learn (Ajzen 2002).

The factors of learner motivation, meaningful learning through learning design, learning alignment and learning application when combined, produced what a learner learnt and how the learner would receive it, connect to it and learn from it (Mosel 1957). Walsh (2007) supported Mosel and added the combination of learning design, learning alignment and learning application was a formula for effective learning transfer and provided learning value for the learner and the organisation.

The reinforcement of learning application was verified once positive individual beliefs and motivation had been established, only then would the learner have a positive intention to learn (Ajzen 2002). This positive learner motivation was encouraged through the communication and reinforcement of learner beliefs around the value of the learning, the normative beliefs that the outcome was of benefit to the learner, subjective norms were positive and the belief that the new learning could be applied (Ajzen 2002).
2.7.2 Perceived versus actual behavioural control

Differences existed between individuals in terms of their general ability to exercise control over their own actions (Ajzen & Madden 1985). Rotter (1966) considered the issue of control over actions by developing an internal-external locus of control scale designed to measure such generalisations. Expectancies regarding locus of control over actions were likely to influence behaviour only to the extent that they have impact on perceived control over the specific behaviour (Ajzen & Madden 1985).

When actual behavioural control was high, changes in control beliefs were able to bring individual’s perceived behavioural control in line with their actual behavioural control (Fishbein & Ajzen 2010) (see table 2.3). When perceived and actual behavioural control was low, individuals, not surprisingly did not perform the behaviour and therefore needed to identify the critical internal and external control factors preventing them from executing the desired behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen 2010).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High Actual Control</th>
<th>Low Actual Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Perceived Control</td>
<td>Behaviour is likely to be performed. No intervention required.</td>
<td>Provide skills or remove barriers to actual control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Perceived Control</td>
<td>Raise perceived control to bring it in line with actual control</td>
<td>Provide skills or remove barriers to actual control and raise perceived control.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.3: Source: Fishbein and Ajzen (2010).

An intended behaviour would be carried out only if an individual’s personal skills and abilities were sufficient to overcome external barriers that may be encountered, for example, bureaucratic barriers or lack of social support (Fishbein & Ajzen 2010). This study investigated these extrinsic and intrinsic learning transfer barriers created by organisational actions.

2.7.3 Learning transfer climate influencing individual actions

A learning transfer climate is the perceived state through which the work environment affects work attitudes and behaviours that lead to actions (Kopelman, Brief & Guzzo 1990). When behaviour was positively reinforced, that behaviour
would reoccur (Skinner 1954). Burke and Saks (2009) proposed extrinsic factors may have influence over a learner's perception of the level of behavioural control to transfer and apply their workplace learning.

A learning transfer climate was influenced by the relationship between: firstly, the organisational context; secondly, an individual’s attitude towards the job; and thirdly, the behaviour and actions encountered on the job (Mathieu, Tannenbaum & Salas 1992). Even when learning occurred the learning transfer climate may either support or inhibit the learning's application into the workplace (Mathieu, Tannenbaum & Salas 1992).

An individual’s behaviour change is able to be observed as new actions in response to a given situation (Ajzen 2002). A behaviour change is the action and function of compatible intentions and perceptions of behavioural control (Ajzen 2002). An individual’s perceived behavioural control therefore was expected to moderate the effect of intention on behaviour such that a favourable intention produced a behaviour change only when perceived behavioural control was strong (see table 2.3 above) (Ajzen 2002).

The opportunity to perform [or what this research refers to as actual behavioural control] is an important learning transfer climate construct (Baldwin & Ford 1988). Assumptions that individuals had similar opportunities to practice and perform learned knowledge and skills in the workplace may in fact not be the case (Ford et al. 1992).

In their study into learning transfer climate, Rouillier and Goldstein (1993) concluded individuals perceived the learning transfer climate according to the organisational cues of supervisors, peers, the task or self (Rouillier & Goldstein 1993). This suggested that the learning transfer climate was influenced by a combination of internal and external factors. This research explored the actions of the organisations, managers and others that provided this influence over the learning transfer climate and therefore over an employee’s ability to transfer and apply their learning.
### 2.7.4 Organisational learning transfer climate

Organisational climate developed from an employee's psychological state that was influenced by organisational conditions, as discussed previously in this chapter. Several conditions are able to influence the creation of an organisational climate, for example the organisational culture, the organisational environment or managerial influences (Bates & Khasawneh 2005), which suggested that the organisational climate was a psychological product of the workplace environment.

Our knowledge and understanding of how organisational climate affected learning transfer within the workplace environment remained in its infancy (Clarke 2002). Defining and accurately assessing the learning transfer climate was essential in organisations as it assisted the move from questioning whether training works to why training works (Tannenbaum & Yukl 1992). Without identifying the organisational influence over the learning transfer climate, isolating the value of training was difficult and may lead to erroneous conclusions about the interventions outcomes (Holton 1996).

The learning transfer climate as a construct was assumed to be generalizable across organisational groups and departments (James, Jones & Ashe 1990). This James et al. based on three factors: the similarity of structural characteristics within the organisation; the attraction, selection and attrition of organisational members; and, the shared meaning that developed out of the social interactions among organisational members. These factors justified the aggregation of learning transfer climate data for the purpose of analysis at higher levels such as groups, departments or the organisation itself (James, Jones & Ashe 1990). Denison (1996) supported this view adding organisational learning transfer climate highlighted individual expectations, perceptions and interpretations of the organisational culture.

This research explored the organisational influence and the expectations, perceptions and interpretations of employees, their managers and organisational stakeholders as organisational actions (this study’s MV3) that influenced the learning transfer climate within multiple organisations.
2.8 Conclusion

The rapidly changing nature of workplace practices within an organisational environment demanded the ability to be constantly learning in the workplace (Goold 2006). The changes in organisational development practices have led to a requirement for different roles, approaches, skills and competencies in transferring learning (Goold 2006). Organisations that provided supportive environments, which enabled quality learning to take place individually and collectively, encouraged the successful transfer of knowledge and skills into the workplace (Goold 2006).

A review of literature considered aspects and barriers influencing organisational learning transfer, in particular, by the contributions of Baldwin and Ford (1988), Pfeffer (1997), Steiner (1998), Taylor et al. (2005) and Goold (2006). Drawing these barriers together suggested three separate but overarching variables for investigation: firstly, the organisational learning structure (the organisational environment - this study's MV1); secondly, the influence of stakeholders (organisational stakeholders - this study's MV2); and thirdly, the actions of individuals and managers (organisational actions - this study's MV3). Support for the inclusion of these three overarching variables was provided by Bates and Khasawneh (2005) and Caffarella (2001).

Several authors supported this research's investigation by recommended further research into learning transfer and transfer barriers (Bates & Khasawneh 2005; Denison 1996; Devos et al. 2007; Goold 2006; Holton et al. 1997) while further authors suggested future research into stakeholder accountability, engagement, accountability studies across multiple organisations and exploring managerial power (Ammeter et al. 2004; Greenwood 2007; Hall 2005; Hall, Blass & Ferris 2003; Kohns & Ponton 2006; Roome & Wijen 2006). The literature review assisted in forming an appropriate organisational research path and in the identification of this study’s three overarching learning transfer variables (MV1, MV2 and MV3) designed to address questions unanswered by extant literature.

Multiple theories were usually compatible within one framework (Ostrom 2011) and this study’s literature review allowed links to be drawn between existing
theories, models and frameworks relevant to investigating barriers to learning transfer. These included Biggs's (2005) 3Ps of teaching and learning - institutional constraints, Schlenker et al. (1994) factors of accountability - the influence of the audience and Ajzen's (2002) TpB's factors of perceived versus actual behavioural control.

The literature suggested future research should design a shortened version of the learning transfer system inventory (LTSI) that considered overarching mini-scales, which investigated the influencing effects between learning transfer constructs (Devos et al. 2007).

In the following Chapter 3 the methodology, research design and research framework selected for this study that addresses the research objectives is outlined. From the literature, as discussed above, three separate but overarching learning transfer variables emerged:

- Organisational environment [this study's Moderating Variable 1 - MV1]
- Organisational stakeholders [this study's Moderating Variable 2 - MV2]
- Organisational actions [this study's Moderating Variable 3 - MV3].

These three moderating variables formed the research platform for this research investigation of barriers to learning transfer. The methodology presented in Chapter 3 includes the research design and the processes used for exploring influences, beliefs and experiences of organisational learners are described.

Chapter 3 further discusses theories that support the inclusion of this study's three moderating variables, the rationale for adopting an analytical framework as a research instrument and the research design methodology. Within this discussion the researcher presents details on how Mwanza’s (2002) 8-step process and notational structure for question forming has been re-aligned to provide an in context data collection methodology and this research's direction for the development of interview questions, the codification of data and the qualitative analysis of data.
Chapter 3 draws together how activity theory and activity system theory have been applied to this study and how the models from Biggs, Schlenker et al. and Ajzen have informed and supported each of this study's three moderating variables within this research's adapted activity system analytical framework.
CHAPTER THREE
Research Methodology and Design Framework

3.1 Introduction

From the perspective of an employee’s professional development training, the aim of this research was to understand enabling and limiting factors of organisational learning transfer and to develop a framework or guide for identifying these factors. The objectives of this study were to firstly explore overarching learning transfer barriers as moderating factors influencing learning transfer; secondly, to identify a simplified methodology and process for investigating learning transfer issues within organisations; and thirdly, from the analysis of data, attempt to provide an explanation for the gap between the reported high annual investments in organisational training and the suggested low learning transfer rates produced by training.

The methodological approach adopted for this research was a naturalistic paradigm that investigated this social organisational phenomenon. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested the naturalistic paradigm was resonant with the vanguard of thinking:

“If one is interested in enquiry that is ongoing at the forefront of disciplines, the naturalistic paradigm is the paradigm of choice” (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p. 50).

Naturalistic inquiry provides social scientists with a basic but comprehensive rationale for non-positivistic approaches to research (Lincoln & Guba 1985). Lincoln and Guba suggested this concept confronted the basic premise underlying the scientific tradition that all questions could be answered by employing empirical, testable, replicable research techniques. There exists however scientific facts that current paradigms are unable to explain, which argues against a traditional positivistic inquiry and suggests an alternative approach, that of using the naturalistic paradigm (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

Qualitative researchers are able to use a naturalistic approach to understand phenomena in context-specific settings that report typical and detailed insights
into participants' experiences of their world (Hoepfl 1997). This chapter describes the use of a naturalistic paradigm and the qualitative method of research inquiry applied to this study into individuals' beliefs and experiences of learning transfer within and across multiple organisations.

Supporting this study's qualitative investigation of organisational learning transfer was the Bates and Khasawneh (2005) study outlined in chapter 2. The study relied on self-report and survey data for identifying learning transfer issues. Research that used qualitative methods to investigate the learning transfer issue are able to provide additional insights within that qualitative investigation (Bates & Khasawneh 2005). Using data collection methods such as focus groups or interviews provided understanding into the cues, contingencies and other organisational attributes influencing employee attitudes, beliefs and behaviours relevant to learning transfer within organisations and its application (Bates & Khasawneh 2005).

As provided in the introduction of chapter 2 and to refine and provide clarity for the reader, table 3.1 below outlines this chapter's content headings, influential authors and those authors' linkages to concepts, models and literature.
Literature discussed (Chapter Three) | Influential authors | Concepts and models in context
--- | --- | ---


Table 3.1: Source: Author

### 3.2 Research method

**3.2.1 Introduction**

A research methodology that investigated the attitudes and perceptions of people is able to discover an individual’s internal beliefs and knowledge in order to develop an understanding of the world from their perspective (Lincoln & Guba 1985). The perspectives adopted for this study’s naturalistic inquiry are the qualitative research principles from Lincoln and Guba (Lincoln & Guba 1985). These adopted principles have also been applied to the collection and analysis of the data. How these principles aligned with this study is presented in table 3.2
(application of research characteristics) however a discussion and support for this alignment is now offered.

From the extant literature outlined in chapter 2, this study formed a research methodology approach. A naturalistic research paradigm was ideally suited and met the research purpose of exploring learning transfer as a contemporary social phenomenon within organisations. In support of this approach, a naturalistic research interaction was able to take place within the entity-in-context that enabled maximum understanding and meaning (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

3.2.2 Natural setting
Naturalistic inquiry is a method of research that centres on two guiding principles (Hillman 2007): firstly, individuals cannot be separated or removed from the physical, social or cultural elements of their environment. For example, individuals constantly seek to influence and are in turn influenced by the nature of their environment and their behaviour, which could be explained in terms of their person-environment interaction; and secondly, interpreting an individual's experiences, perceptions and behaviours requires an inquiry of the personal meanings and perspectives that guides their behaviour and actions within his or her environment (Hillman 2007). These guiding principles informed the methodology underpinning this study's qualitative investigation.

3.2.3 Humans as data gathering instruments
Humans provided adaptability to encompass and adjust to a variety of realities that were encountered and were instruments capable of grasping and evaluating meaning from different interactions (Lincoln & Guba 1985). Qualitative research is oriented toward the understanding of a natural world, is highly interpretive in nature, recognizes the multifaceted interpretations of human experience and the iterative relationship within social and cultural systems (Gall, Borg & Gall 1996). The focus of qualitative research is on understanding how people made sense of their world with exploitation of different aspects and different expressions and provided both researchers and participants with a discovering experience (Gall, Borg & Gall 1996). For this study, the researcher was the only collector of research data.
3.2.4 Utilisation of tacit knowledge
The term tacit knowledge could be generally attributed to an individual’s direct work experience within a specific area (Gourlay 2006). Within an organisation, the attainment of tacit knowledge from formal training and/or informal learning was possible (Gourlay 2006). The researcher drew on personal management experience within organisations and knowledge from formal and informal learning.

3.2.5 Qualitative methods
A qualitative approach to the analysis rather than quantitative provided more meaning and personal significance (Kozlowski & Ilgen 2006). Bates and Khasawneh (2005) recommended that a qualitative comparison of learning transfer as an organisational phenomenon was able to add depth and assist in the formation of conclusions that could lead to generalisation.

The literature search identified positives in selecting a qualitative research approach for this study (Bates & Khasawneh 2005; Lincoln & Guba 1985; Mintzberg 1979). This study proposed that deeper knowledge about organisational learning transfer and the learning transfer climate gained from a qualitative investigation into multiple individuals’ experiences across diverse industries was able to enrich the general field of research.

3.2.6 Purposive sampling
A naturalistic inquiry employed a qualitative research methodology within the environment of the people being studied in order to interact with them and learn from them (Lincoln & Guba 1985). The qualitative approach allowed the researcher to investigate one or more organisations in action at the closer range and thus gave a better understanding of the phenomenon. The advantage of a qualitative techniques was that they offered the opportunity to collect rich and comparable data across organisations (Lincoln & Guba 1985). This study purposefully selected five organisations from diverse industry sectors and requested interviewees from a variety of management levels to gain the broadest perspective on barriers to learning transfer.
3.2.7 Inductive data analysis
The use of an inductive approach in qualitative research has three purposes (Thomas 2003): firstly, condense extensive and varied raw text data into brief summary format; secondly, establish clear links between the research objectives and the summary of findings drawn from the raw data; and thirdly, develop a model or theory about the underlying structure of experiences or processes which emerged from the raw data (Thomas 2003). This study transcribed digitally recorded interview data, condensed raw data, established links to the research objectives and developed a framework for investigating learning transfer within organisations (see an example of a digitally recorded transcript at Appendix IX).

3.2.8 Negotiated outcomes
A qualitative research study method within organisations is an observed inquiry that investigates contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin 2003). This research collected data from multiple interviewees across multiple organisations and built trust and openness with interviewees and organisations by using detailed ethical research practices that ensured confidentiality and anonymity.

3.2.9 Idiographic interpretation
Qualitative research is made up of a set of interpretive practices (Denzin & Lincoln 2000). In many instances quantitative attributes are integrated into qualitative research design and into the analysis of data, which assists to enrich the understanding of the research findings (Denzin & Lincoln 2000). Qualitative researchers draw conclusions within the situational context of a study ideographically rather than the development of generalisations nomothetically due to different interpretations, local values and the contextual factors involved (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

Identifying organisational issues means getting out there into the organisations instead of simply collecting and completing questionnaires (Mintzberg 1979). Mintzberg implied that collecting observations and recordings of activities as they happen was the only way of gaining deeper insight into the dynamics of the
organisation. This study ideographically interpreted data collectively from all thirty-one interviewees across the five organisations researched.

3.2.10 **Tentative application**
Researchers were likely to be tentative or hesitant about making broad application of the findings within a naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba 1985). This hesitation resulted from a dependence on interactions between the researcher and interviewees that may not be duplicated elsewhere (Lincoln & Guba 1985). The interpretive practices used in this research were based on semi-structured interviews that were digitally recorded. Research participants commented on organisational practices including their experiences and perspectives of their colleagues and their managers in relation to the effectiveness of workplace learning transfer within their organisation (see an example of a digitally recorded transcript at Appendix IX). This study's tentative application and interpretation of data was therefore influenced from and between research setting to research setting (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

3.2.11 **Focus-determined boundaries**
The identification and specification of research issues are able to be left to the perceptions of the researcher (Glaser 1996) and the researcher allowed to predetermine the subject of inquiry before starting the inquiry (Strauss & Corbin 1990). Boundaries were set that provided emergent focus and permitted the multiple realities to define the focus rather than relying on a researcher's preconceptions (Lincoln & Guba 1985). One of the benefits for researchers using qualitative research methods within organisations was the opportunity to have an insider's view with an outsider's opinion of the phenomenon under investigation (Carson et al. 2001). Researchers usually have no control over or insights into the events within an organisation, however qualitative researchers are able to by empirically investigating the contemporary phenomenon in a real life context (Eisenhardt 1989b). Exploring issues and barriers influencing learning transfer within organisations required the researcher to set research criteria and provide defined interview question boundaries in line with an adapted Mwanza's (2002) 8-step question forming process and notational structure (see tables 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9).
3.2.12 Application of research characteristics

This study supported characteristics of a naturalistic research paradigm as outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985). These characteristics included natural setting, humans as data gathering instruments, utilisation of tacit knowledge, qualitative methods using semi-structured interviews supported by the researcher's observation notes, purposive sampling, inductive data analysis, negotiated outcomes, idiographic interpretation (interpretative practices), tentative application and focus-determined boundaries as discussed above. Table 3.2 outlines how these characteristics have been adapted to this research.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Naturalistic Research Paradigm Characteristic</th>
<th>Application of Research Characteristic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural setting</td>
<td>Data collected in the learner's place of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human as data-gathering instrument</td>
<td>The researcher was the only collector of research data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilisation of tacit knowledge</td>
<td>The researcher relied on personal management experience within organisations through both formal and informal learning and in the areas of adult learning and professional development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative methods</td>
<td>Individual semi-structured interviews conducted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposive sampling</td>
<td>Potential interviewees invited to participate as employees of the sample organisations chosen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inductive data analysis</td>
<td>Narrative data from semi-structured interviews was analysed to identify themes that developed a rich picture of interviewee’s beliefs and their experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergent design</td>
<td>From the analysis of data: connections, comparisons, and themes emerged that supported and provided interrelationships that identified three moderating variables (MV1, MV2 and MV3).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiated outcome</td>
<td>Interviewee involvement negotiated through formal consent from the research organisations. Each interviewee signed a confidentiality agreement, building trust with the researcher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idiographic interpretation (Interpretative Practices)</td>
<td>Information was requested through semi-structured interviews and digitally recorded. This data was representative of how their expectation, beliefs and perceptions were at the time of the interview. Process observation used to assist in the interpretation of interview data and themes arising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tentative application</td>
<td>Interpretation of the data resulted in a description of the interviewee’s experiences, beliefs and perceptions of their organisational learning transfer environment, the influences of organisational stakeholders and the organisational actions they encounter when attempting to transfer learning into the workplace. Interviewees ascribe meaning (positively or negatively) to their intrinsic and extrinsic experiences and the strategies that they used to overcome these barriers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus-determined boundaries</td>
<td>The nature of identifying the influence of moderating variables on learning transfer focused this study on those individuals attending an internal learning intervention or training event. This research also limited its focus to those stakeholders and managers that had direct influence over or accountability for the interviewee who attended a recent professional development learning intervention.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2: Adapted characteristics of research design from Lincoln and Guba (1985)
3.2.13 Research process

The qualitative research process, in context to this study outlined below, links each of the research steps, identifies the organisations researched, the tasks of data collection and analysis and how the results influenced the research instrument (see figure 3.1).

![Figure 3.1: Source: Author - Qualitative research process](image)

3.2.13.1 Identification of research variables

Researchers formulate a research problem that specify some potentially important variables in reference to the extant literature (Eisenhardt 1989b). There has been some confusion within social psychological research between the terms moderating variables and mediating variables (Baron & Kenny 1986). Although these terms have relatively long traditions within social sciences, it is not uncommon for social psychological researchers to use the terms moderator and mediator interchangeably (Baron & Kenny 1986).
Barron and Kenny provided an example of this from Findley and Cooper (1983), where intending a moderator interpretation, labelled gender, age, race and socio-economic level as mediators of the relationship between locus of control and academic achievement (Baron & Kenny 1986). Within context, this researcher investigated conceptual and strategic relationships rather than statistical analysis of a learner ability to transfer their new learning. This study therefore identified what moderating influence the actions of their organisation had over a learner’s learning transfer. This example aligns with the context of this study and therefore the researcher agreed with the Barron and Kenny interpretation that these influencing actions and relational outcomes were a result of moderating variables.

Support for this study’s use of the term moderating variables to describe the three overarching variables identified from the literature in Chapter 2 was provided by Siegel (2008). Siegel suggested that a moderating variable was one that modified the relationship of the independent variable with an observed phenomenon. Within the context of this study, the independent variable was the learner and the observed phenomenon was the learner’s ability to transfer and apply their learning, therefore the three overarching variables influenced and moderated this relationship.

In general terms, a moderator can be a qualitative or quantitative variable that affects the direction and/or strength of the relationship between an independent and a dependant variable (Baron & Kenny 1986). Moderator variables however, are developed prior to the collection of data whereas mediating variables generally emerge during data collection and from the data (NationalService-LearningClearninghouse 2013). From the review of the extant literature in Chapter 2, this study’s three overarching learning transfer variables were identified prior to the development of the research design and therefore were able to provide guidance for this study’s data collection.

As discussed above this study’s three overarching learning transfer variables were identified as influencing the learner - learning transfer relationship and therefore aligned with the term moderating variables. The three moderating variables that have been identified as providing overarching influence on an employee’s
organisational learning transfer were: organisational environment (moderating variable 1 - MV1), organisational stakeholders (moderating variable 2 - MV2) and organisational actions (moderating variable 3 - MV3). These three moderating variables allowed investigation of the relationship between the learner and their ability to achieve learning transfer via an activity system analytical framework (discussed further in this chapter). This investigation of learning transfer issues were explored as social phenomenon within the real-life context of an employee's organisation.

3.2.14 Selection of organisations and scope of research

3.2.14.1 Selection process of research organisations

A snowballing sampling technique could be described as a systematic non-probabilistic purposive sampling method that is very apt for qualitative research (Arce 2001). Qualitative studies call for a purposive non-probability sampling design which often rely heavily on the availability of respondents especially those who are difficult to contact for interviews (David 2002).

The snowballing sampling technique is also known as chain referral sampling and is considered a type of purposive sampling (Gilbert 2001). Chain referrals are where participants or informants with whom contact had already been made and use their social networks to refer the researcher to other people who are able to potentially participate in or contribute to a study (Gilbert 2001). This study used the researchers' business contacts to approach several organisations as potential research candidates. This selection approach occasioned results in two ways: firstly, organisations agreed to participate in this research; or secondly, organisations approached, for a number of reasons, did not want to or were unable to participate however knew of another organisation that may have been interested and recommended them to the researcher.

The outcome of the snowballing process resulted in five organisations that met the research criteria and agreed to participate. The five organisations selected were from diverse industry sectors within Australia.
3.2.14.2 Scope of study
A multiple organisation study design allows for cross-organisation analysis, comparison between organisations and the investigation of a particular phenomenon within diverse settings (Yin 2003). Multiple organisations may also be selected to predict similar results (literal replication) or to produce contrasting results for predictable reasons (theoretical replication) (Yin 1994). Studies of multiple-organisations strengthened research findings in the way that multiple experiments strengthened experimental research findings (Yin 1994). This research used a multiple organisation study design to maximise the opportunity for both literal and theoretical replication data to emerge.

This study analysed data from the perspective of an organisational learner’s beliefs and experiences in transferring their learning into the workplace. Thirty-one one-on-one semi-structured interviews within five Australian organisations were conducted and digitally recorded. Each one-on-one interview identified interviewees’ expectations and perceptions of the organisation before, during and following an internal professional development learning intervention. Digitally recorded interview data from the five organisation's researched were transcribed into Microsoft Word documents and then analysed to identify emergent themes, links, patterns and trends.

3.2.14.3 Research organisation sample size
Qualitative research is concerned with meaning and not making generalised hypothesis statements (Crouch & McKenzie 2006). Within each data source there is an emphasis on depth and quality rather than population size (Eisenhardt 1989b). Within literature, there are no set rules for the selection of a sample size in qualitative research therefore each scenario needed to be considered in context (Patton 1990). To increase research validity, a minimum of four and a maximum of ten research organisations would be found desirable (Eisenhardt 1989b). Yin (2003) later recommended a research sample size of between 5 and 10. This study agreed with these recommendations and investigated five organisations within Australia.
3.2.14.4 Qualitative interview sample size

Interviews are essential sources of information for organisational research (Yin 1994) and collecting research data from participants is difficult and time consuming (Cavaye 1996). The issue of interviewee sample size had gained recent attention in a study into sample size and saturation in PhD studies using qualitative interviews (Mason 2010).

Mason (2010) researched 560 PhD studies that used a qualitative approach and with qualitative interviews as the method of data collection, assessing them for their interview sample size. Results concluded a large proportion of the samples (80%) adhered to Bertaux's (1981) guidelines of 15 being the smallest number of participants for a qualitative study irrespective of the methodology. Most qualitative studies adhered to Ritchie et al. (2003) guidelines that samples lie below 50 interviewees (Mason 2010). The ideal sample size was therefore a median of 28 and a mean of 31 participants for each study (Mason 2010). The scope of this study's research participants included thirty-one interviewees.

3.2.15 Researchers’ observations

It is essential to assess the perceptions of employees directly and there is value in employing multiple sources containing employee self-reports via interviews and participant observations (Hsiu-Yen-Hsu 2009). Hsui-Yen Hsu further offered that these methods helped collect data and analyse the various relationships of organisational learning.

An observer collecting data in one particular situation was in a position to appraise a practice or proposition within that setting, observing effects in context (Lincoln & Guba 1985). In trying to describe an account of what happened, a researcher that attributed attention to whatever variables were controlled and gave equally careful attention to uncontrolled conditions, was in a position to identify personal characteristics and events that occurred during qualitative investigations (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

During the data collection process this researcher digitally recorded interviews, however combined the Lincoln and Guba (1985) method of observing controlled and uncontrolled variables of the interviewee's personal and environmental
characteristics and recorded notes on these variables (see researchers’ observation notes at Appendix IV).

Qualitative data analysis consists of three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles & Huberman 1994). From the outset of data collection, this researcher began to seek meaning from the observation notes. Seeking data meaning by reducing and condensing data as the study progressed was recommended and that qualitative researchers were able to derive meaning and patterns from data by reviewing data for categories of phenomena (LeCompte & Goetz 1982).

The researcher therefore observed and noted the thirty-one interviewees whilst they commented on organisational practices including their beliefs, experiences and perspectives of their colleagues and their managers in relation to the effectiveness of workplace learning transfer within their organisation.

3.2.16 Ethical research
This study secured ethics approval from the university’s ethics committee prior to the commencement of any data collection (SUHREC Project 2011/158, as shown in Appendix VIII). Within the scope of this approval, issues of confidentiality and anonymity of the participants involved were acknowledged and detailed. These issues included the identity and confidentiality of the five selected organisations, the contact person in each organisation and that of the thirty-one interviewees. Each of the selected organisations responded positively to ethical research criteria (see research information sheet at Appendix V, organisation research consent form at Appendix VI and interviewee research consent form at Appendix VII).

3.3 Research Design Methodology and Framework
3.3.1 Introduction
Presented is the rationale for adopting activity theory and activity system theory as a research instrument for the investigation of how learning transfer practices are culturally and historically situated within organisations. These learning transfer practices are explored from the perspective of employees’ beliefs and experiences. The organisational learning environment and the influences and
actions of an employee’s senior management team, their managers and learning professionals are investigated.

The methodology and experimental procedures of activity theory and activity system theory contrast with those of Anglo-American empiricist psychology (Engestrom, Miettinen & Punamaki 1999). Many studies using activity theory include large samples and measurement, however there has been no indication that statistical analysis was ever used or was needed (Engestrom, Miettinen & Punamaki 1999). This suggests that activity theory and activity system theory are ideal investigative frameworks for qualitative research.

As outlined previously, this study identified three overarching learning transfer variables within the literature discussed in Chapter 2. These three variables were adapted to Engestrom’s (1999) activity system analytical framework. Engestrom described his framework elements as components or simply as variables, whereas Mwanza (2001) identified the elements as mediators and Whitefield (2004) labelled them mediators of activity. From the previous discussion in this chapter there exists an apparent confusion within social research of the terms moderating and mediating variables. This study therefore proposed the most appropriate description of the three variables (MV1, MV2 and MV3) identified in this research was the term moderating variables.

The exploration of activity using an activity system framework as a research instrument was the framework’s original intent (Barab, Evans & Baek 2004; Engestrom 1999; Mwanza 2001). The development and use of frameworks are the most general forms of theoretical analysis and identify the elements and general relationships of variables for diagnostic and prescriptive inquiry (Ostrom 2011). Using a diagnostic framework provides the concepts and terms that may be used to construct the kinds of causal explanations expected of a theory (McGinnis & Ostrom 2011).

This study’s research design is outlined in this section and the selection and adaption of an activity system analytical framework, as the research instrument, is presented. This study’s research instrument adapted an activity system in context to explore issues of human activity (transferring learning) within a social setting
(organisations). The three moderating variables (MV1, MV2 and MV3) and factors of the research instrument are informed by organisational barriers to learning transfer and several theories identified in the literature as presented in Chapter 2. Prior to the presentation of the research design and research instrument, it is important to explore the concept of human activity and its origins in literature.

### 3.3.2 Cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT)

In the early work of the Russian cultural-historical school the unit of activity analysis was “an object-oriented action mediated by cultural tools and signs” (Vygotsky 1978, p. 40). The notion that human actions were influenced by their environment was credited to Vygotsky however it was left to his colleague Leont’ev (1978) to develop a triangular framework for activity theory (see figure 3.2).

![Adapted triadic representation of actions](Source: Engestrom, Miettinen and Punamaki 1999.)

Cultural-historical activity theory is more commonly referred to as activity theory and identifies the notion of human activity (Engestrom 1999). In contrast to his intellectual peers, Vygotsky maintained that all psychological activity was mediated by a third influencing artefact or tool (Barab, Evans & Baek 2004). Activity theory can be conceptualised as an organising structure for analysing the mediational roles of artefacts and tools within a cultural-historical context (Barab, Evans & Baek 2004).

Activity theory is defined as a psychological multidisciplinary theory with a naturalistic emphasis that offers a framework for describing activity and provides a set of perspectives on practice that interlink individual and social levels (Engestrom 1987). The human element of activity theory evolved from the various achievements of psychoanalysis and the concept of activity from the evolution of
genetic epistemology based on the notion of action, operation and the formation of mental actions (Engestrom 1999).

Activity theory attempts to formulate theories of practice (Chaiklin & Lave 1993) and socio-cultural psychology (Martin, Nelson & Tobach 1995). Activity theory was developed within psychology and used primarily within the areas of experimental development of instruction and implemented within the context of schools and other institutions (Engestrom 1999). Support for the adoption of activity theory in this research as a method for exploring learning transfer within organisations was provided by Jonassen (2000):

“Activity theory provides an alternative lens for analysing learning [and work] processes and outcomes that capture more of the complexity and interrelatedness with the context and community that surrounds and supports it” (Jonassen 2000, p. 11).

Activity-theoretical ideas are having increased impact in specific societal fields of enquiry such as learning and teaching (Moll 1990) and is commonly invoked by researchers and practitioners in instructional and performance technology, educational psychology and organisational learning (Barab, Evans & Baek 2004). This is further supported by Whitefield (2004) in a study using activity theory that investigated student use of laptop computers within secondary schools and by Zurita and Nussbaum (2007) in their examination of student social interactions, motivation and learning.

Activity-theoretical research has become broader from the 1980’s onward, encompassing such topics as the development of work related activities (Engestrom 1999). One of the most powerful and frequently invoked uses of activity theory has been as a lens, map or orienting device used to structure the analysis of complex sociocultural issues of learning and performance (Barab, Evans & Baek 2004). Activity theory therefore presents an expansive view of learning, engrained in practice, that has been taken up in many studies of workplace learning and innovation (Engestrom 1999). Activity theory holds the view that the constituents of activity are not fixed and can dynamically change as conditions change (Barab, Evans & Baek 2004).
As activity can be a central concept that includes any human interaction (Engestrom 1999), activity theory is ideally suited to this study's investigation of human beliefs, actions and experiences of learning transfer within organisations. The second objective of this study was to explore calls for a simplified diagnostic (Devos et al. 2007) guiding the investigation of barriers to organisational learning transfer. Activity theory forms the theoretical platform for this study's simplified learning transfer diagnostic.

Activity theory provides an ideal position for observing individuals at work, alone or in collaboration with others (Barab, Evans & Baek 2004). The sociocultural socio-historical lens of activity theory helps managers and designers of workplace learning to analyse human activity systems (Pircher, Zenk & Risku 2008).

The activity system built on activity theory and provided a schematic framework for viewing and designing tool-mediated activity as it occurred in a naturally organised setting (Barab, Evans & Baek 2004). Activity system theory therefore builds on an activity theory platform to develop this study's research instrument and is now discussed.

### 3.3.3 Activity system theory

An activity system recognises two basic processes operating continuously at every level of human activity, internalisation and externalisation (Engestrom 1987). The internal tensions and contradictions of such a system are the motives for change and development (Leont'ev 1978) that may highlight organisational learning transfer barriers (Goold 2006). This study explored these internal activities within multiple organisations whilst investigating the intrinsic and extrinsic influences of these activities upon individual organisational learners.

The units of analysis within an activity system are accentuated and driven by continuous transitions and transformations: firstly, the embedded hierarchical levels of collective motive-driven activity; secondly, an individual's goal-driven action; and thirdly, the automatic operations influenced by the tools and conditions of action (Leont'ev 1978). Leont'ev added, these elements within an activity system enabled an analysis to include both historical [the culture] and situated [the environment] contingencies.
An interactive system model was needed in studies of organisations that take into account complex social interactions (Freeman 1994). This research presented such an explorative framework as a research instrument investigating individual interactions developed and adapted to research a complex organisational issue, learning transfer.

A study into aligning learning with organisational processes (Pircher, Zenk & Risku 2008) used an activity system to explore the organisational environment and its influence on employee competencies, which supported the use of an activity system framework in investigating learning transfer within organisations. An activity system provided an appropriate framework for analysing learning needs, tasks and outcomes within organisations (Pircher, Zenk & Risku 2008). Pircher, Zenk et al. further suggested the final step of an activity system analysis assesses how its components influence each other and identify interrelationships. These interrelations are further discussed in Chapter 7.

Engestrom (1987) added three further variables to Vygotsky’s (1978) activity theory when developing his activity system framework. By functionally relating each of the activity theory components (subject, tool and object) as sub-functions of the larger activity system framework triangle (that included the factors rules, community and division of labour) researchers and practitioners were able to appreciate how the activity system functioned as a unit (Barab, Evans & Baek 2004) (see figure 3.3 below).

3.3.3.1 Aspects of an activity system framework
Learning within any system occurred by distributing knowledge throughout a group of individuals and may be viewed and examined as a change in these communities’ joint actions (Engestrom 1999). The community itself defined what constitutes legitimate practice, where individuals learnt as they participate by interacting with the community thus knowing was interminably inventive and entwined with doing (Lave & Wenger 1991). This suggested an organisational environment defined its individual rules and community of practice that influenced the actions of its members.
The learning process involves the activity system’s object, mediating artefact and the perspectives of the individual or subject participating in the activity (Engestrom 1999). The object within an activity system is the problem at which activity is directed and further shapes activity by determining the horizon of possible action and therefore was eventually changed into an outcome (Engestrom 1999).

When activity occurred it is shaped by the mediating artefact (Vygotsky 1978). Engestrom (1999) expanded Vygotsky’s activity theory believing human activity was also influenced by the subject’s rules and cultural norms, the community in which the subject operated and the influence of division of labour and power (see figure 3.3). This created an activity system framework and is the language and the tool in which an activity system engaged in to explore the object and identify an outcome (Engestrom 1999).

![Activity System Diagram](image)

*Figure 3.3: Activity System: Source: Engestrom, Miettinen and Punamaki, 1999.*

An activity system framework is a qualitative analytical tool designed to investigate a static snapshot of a current issue, however every system has a history and nested actions which when viewed from different perspectives and different points in time constitute their own and further activity systems (Barab, Evans & Baek 2004).

Activity theory viewed learning as the collective construction and resolution of successively evolving tensions or contradictions in a complex system (Engestrom
1999), however learning occurred in an activity system as a cycle of questioning the interaction between the subject and the object (Engestrom 1999; Mwanza 2002). This suggested an activity system was a method for data collection, question forming and question analysis and is discussed further in this chapter (see sub-heading 3.4.1).

The research design process and theoretical support for adapting this study's moderating variables MV1, MV2 and MV3 to an activity system analytical framework emerged from the literature and is discussed in the sections below, however to provide reader clarity each of the steps this researcher took are now outlined.

- Steiner’s (1998) three influential factors of learning transfer, organisational structure, the individual and the flow-group and managerial actions are illustrated in a graphic as variables that influenced a learner’s journey (the subject) in attempting to transfer their learning (the object) (see figure 3.4).

- Goold’s (2006) ten barriers to learning transfer, presented and illustrated in Chapter 2 table 2.2, were then aligned with Steiner’s three influential factors of learning transfer (see table 3.3). When combined in this table, each of the learning transfer barriers identified this study’s three overarching moderating variables MV1, MV2 and MV3 (see table 3.3).

- The four learning transfer authors presented in Chapter 2, Baldwin and Ford (1988), Pfeffer (1997), Caffarella (2001) and Taylor, Russ-Eft and Chan (2005), acknowledged learning transfer barriers that influenced organisational learning transfer. These four authors together with Goold’s ten learning transfer barriers and the literature presented in Chapter 2 provided the theoretical guidance for this study’s inclusion of the mini-scale factors within each of this study's moderating variables MV1, MV2 and MV3 (see figure 3.5).

- Using this study's three moderating variables (MV1, MV2 and MV3) and the mini-scale factors identified, Engestrom’s (1987) activity system analytical
framework was adapted as the framework for this study's research design and therefore research instrument. With supportive literature from Chapter 2 and behavioural and organisational theories and models acknowledged, this study has presented its research instrument in section 3.3.5.6 (see figure 3.11).

- Theoretical support for this study's three moderating variables MV1, MV2 and MV3 was provided by three key authors. Firstly, Biggs's adapted 3P model of teaching and learning informed this research through Biggs's adaptation of Reid's (1987) work in what Reid termed institutional constraints (see figure 3.6); secondly, the theoretical platform that guided this study's MV2 was Schlenker et al. (1994) accountability pyramid (see figure 3.8); and thirdly, Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour (TpB) provided the theoretical platform for this study's moderating variable three (MV3) (see figure 3.9).

3.3.4 Adapting an activity system analytical framework
Organisations are viewed as systems and because systems tend to evolve current theories have identified several organisational behavioural mechanisms (Engestrom 1987; Schlenker et al. 1994). Some behavioural mechanisms involve the articulation and implementation of organisational goals or the development of organisational roles, while others identify organisational activities (Frink & Klimoski 2004). These three mechanisms or activities are factors that inform the activity system variables rules, community and division of labour (Engestrom 1987).

Central to an activity system analytical framework is the suggestion that there are intrinsic and extrinsic influences that the subject or individual will encounter upon their journey toward reaching the object or goal (Engestrom, Miettinen & Punamaki 1999; Vygotsky 1978). These influences, which Vygotsky (1978) identified as mediating artefacts or tools, were identified in Chapter 2 and within the context of this study as this researcher's moderating variables MV1, MV2 and MV3.
The objective of an activity system is ultimately the transformation process (Mwanza 2001) from subject (the workplace learner) through object (learning transfer) to outcome (the application of workplace learning) and how this process has been influenced by variables. The individual is central to the issue of learning barriers (Senge 1990). It was for this reason that the individual learner was selected as the subject and central actor of this study’s research instrument. Learning transfer therefore became the object of this study’s exploration to identify how organisational environment (MV1), organisational stakeholders (MV2) and the organisational actions (MV3) influenced an individual attempting to transfer their learning.

This researcher's three moderating variables (MV1, MV2 and MV3) discussed in Chapter 2 emerged from the literature (Baldwin & Ford 1988; Caffarella 2001; Goold 2006; Pfeffer 1997; Steiner 1998; Taylor, Russ-Eft & Chan 2005) as overarching factors that influenced organisational learning transfer. When these overarching learning transfer variables were aligned with activity theory and adapted into an activity system framework, they provided the platform of inquiry informing this study’s research instrument. To clarify how this researcher's three moderating variables (MV1, MV2 and MV3) emerged from the literature and how the emergent theories supported the inclusion of MV1, MV2 and MV3, the following justification has been provided.

This study's process for developing the research design emerged from Steiner's (1998) three influential factors of learning transfer. As discussed in Chapter 2, Steiner's three influential factors of learning transfer were organisational structure, the individual and flow group and managerial actions. Steiner's three influential factors of learning transfer to learning transfer have been adapted below to illustrate how they influence a learner's attempts to achieve learning transfer and therefore the application of their workplace learning (see figure 3.4). The graphic below depicts Steiner's three influential factors of learning transfer in the form of the lower half of an activity system framework (as illustrated in figure 3.3 above).
Goold’s (2006) ten barriers to learning transfer were then aligned with Steiner’s three barriers to learning transfer; organisational structure, the individual and the flow-group and managerial actions (see table 3.3). The alignment of Steiner’s (1998) three influential factors of learning transfer with Goold’s (2006) ten organisational learning barriers indicated the following synergies:

- Goold’s (2006) barriers to learning transfer, numbers four, eight, and nine, represented the influence of organisational structure (organisational environment – MV1)

- Goold’s barriers, three, five and ten identified the influence of individuals or flow-group, i.e. extrinsic barriers such as stakeholders (organisational stakeholders – MV2)

- Goold’s learning transfer barriers one, two, six, and seven were identified as barriers of managerial actions and the actions of individuals within an organisation (organisational actions – MV3).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goold’s Ten Barriers To Organisational Learning</th>
<th>Steiner’s Model</th>
<th>This Study’s Moderating Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1: Bias for action</strong></td>
<td>Time Poor Climate: Urgent day-to-day tasks take precedence over time needed for reflective decision-making, limiting organisational learning and the ability to manage strategic issues.</td>
<td>ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2: Presence of undiscussables [sic]</strong></td>
<td>Building Defensive Strategies: Anxiety and fear of discussing certain issues with others may lead to defensive patterns resulting in reduced performance or commitment.</td>
<td>MANAGERIAL ACTIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3: Commitment to the cause</strong></td>
<td>Organisational Stakeholder’s: Other’s questioning the work ethic may lead to individual reflective thought, under-achievement or a feeling of failure.</td>
<td>ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4: Cultural biases</strong></td>
<td>Operating Environment: Recognising the way different internal organisational cultures operate, and identifying and working within these local values.</td>
<td>ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5: Advocacy at the expense of inquiry</strong></td>
<td>Stakeholder Influence: Attack and/or defend behaviour gives little opportunity for new meanings or insights to emerge.</td>
<td>THE INDIVIDUAL AND FLOW-GROUP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6: The role of leadership and power</strong></td>
<td>Locus of Control: A willingness to let go of control and discuss issues collaboratively may allow existing power relations to be discussed and questioned.</td>
<td>MANAGERIAL ACTIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7: Learning to unlearn</strong></td>
<td>Changing a Behaviour: Letting go of what is known may create space for new learning to embed. This involves unlearning old habits and assumptions.</td>
<td>MANAGERIAL ACTIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8: Practice what we preach</strong></td>
<td>Explicit and Implicit Rules: Promoting values and processes that are not practiced in the workplace leads to distrust (walking the talk).</td>
<td>ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9: The funding environment</strong></td>
<td>Financial structure: Budgetary accountability may increase departmental tensions that restrict openness to new learning.</td>
<td>ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10: Thinking strategically about learning</strong></td>
<td>Organisational Workflow: The promotion of organisational learning may be seen as an interruption to the workflow, rather than central to the organisations vision, mission and strategy. Anxiety may occur resulting from promoting learning to senior management who may be sceptical of the learning alignment and longer-term benefits.</td>
<td>ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3.3: Source: Author*
The alignment of Steiner's (1998) three influential factors of learning transfer with Goold's (2006) ten barriers to learning transfer provided support for this study's adaption of the three activity system analytical framework's moderating variables MV1, MV2 and MV3. These three moderating variables of learning transfer were therefore adapted into the research instrument for this investigation (see figure 3.5).

Further support from literature for adapting an activity system analytical framework with this enquiry's MV1, MV2 and MV3 (presented in Chapter 2 and further discussed in 3.3.5 below) was provided by four learning transfer authors, Baldwin and Ford (1988), Pfeffer (1997), Caffarella (2001) and Taylor, Russ-Eft and Chan (2005). Each of these authors identified learning transfer barriers that bore influence over organisational learning transfer together with Goold's ten barriers provided this study's guidance on influential mini-scale factors within MV1, MV2 and MV3 for investigation (see figure 3.5).

The activity system analytical framework presented in this chapter was adapted to this study by the alignment of learning transfer barriers that emerged from the literature as discussed previously. The lower half of an activity system analytical framework’s term rules was adapted as the organisational environment (MV1), community as organisational stakeholders (MV2) and division of labour as organisational actions (MV3) (see figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5: Source: Author
Adapting MV1, MV2 and MV3 formed the basis for this research’s activity system analytical framework. In the context of this study, the subject’s or learner’s ability to successfully attain the object (learning transfer) was influenced by the three moderating variables, organisational environment (MV1), organisational stakeholders (MV2) and organisational actions (MV3) and therefore produced an outcome (application of workplace learning). Within each of the moderating variables (MV1, MV2 and MV3) the mini-scale factors that enabled or limited learning transfer have been identified from the literature as outlined in Chapter 2, however is now reviewed in brief:

- **Moderating variable one (MV1):** Steiner's (1998) first influential factor of learning transfer - organisational structure and Engestrom’s (1999) factor rules have been adapted to that of organisational environment. MV1 included factors of organisational learning culture, organisational and individual perceptions of learning value, the organisational processes in place for learning and the alignment of learning to individual and organisational goals as factors that influenced learning transfer.

- **Moderating variable two (MV2):** Steiner's (1998) second influential factor of learning transfer - the individual and flow-group and Engestrom’s (1999) factor of community have been adapted to that of organisational stakeholders. MV2 included factors of stakeholder ownership of and accountability for organisational learning and the level of learning support, follow up, coaching and mentoring provided by stakeholders.

- **Moderating variable three (MV3):** Steiner's (1998) third influential factor of learning transfer - managerial actions and Engestrom’s (1999) factor division of labour have been adapted to that of organisational actions. MV3 included factors of the level of learner motivation, perceived versus actual behavioural control over learning transfer and actions that influenced the organisational learning transfer climate.

This study's adapted activity system analytical framework provided the research design and is discussed further in this chapter. It is however relevant to outline theories, models and aspects from the discussion of literature in Chapter 2 and
their interrelationship with organisational learning transfer that provided support for the selection of this study’s three moderating variables MV1, MV2 and MV3.

3.3.5 Alignment of moderating variables and learning transfer factors

3.3.5.1 Introduction
In addressing barriers to learning transfer, organisations must concern themselves with the workplace environment as a learning context, the learning process and the application by learners of new knowledge and skills (Taylor, Russ-Eft & Chan 2005). Exploring barriers to organisational learning transfer identified this study’s three overarching moderating variables, which provided the framework, structure and research design for the investigation of learning transfer using an adapted activity system analytical framework.

Barriers to organisational learning transfer have been identified in literature and presented in Chapter 2 (Baldwin & Ford 1988; Caffarella 2001; Goold 2006; Pfeffer 1997; Steiner 1998; Taylor, Russ-Eft & Chan 2005) and are now discussed in the context of this research and in support of this study’s research design (MV1, MV2 and MV3).

3.3.5.2 Organisational environment (MV1)
MV1 centred on the proposed impact of organisational environment that included culture, implicit or explicit rules or processes for learning and individual and corporate expectations of learning value. The ability of these factors to influence and shape the learning transfer environment and therefore an individual’s learning transfer has been outlined below.

Three identified conditions ideal for an individual’s workplace learning transfer (Mosel 1957) are: firstly, the learner must be motivated to change job behaviour and to apply the new learning; secondly, the learner must learn the content; and thirdly, the training context must be applicable to the job (Mosel 1957). These ideal conditions however afford little consideration to extrinsic or environmental factors that influenced an individual’s learning transfer.

Baldwin and Ford (1988) offered three factors that supported the institutional constraints of Reid (1987) in their model of the learning transfer process. These
factors are, identifying learner characteristics, the instructional design and delivery process and the work environment with the latter added as an important predictor of learning transfer (Baldwin & Ford 1988).

Support for the inclusion of the work environment as a factor influencing learning transfer has been more recently summarised in a study by Burke and Hutchins (2007). The study identified the three primary factors influencing learning transfer as learning characteristics, intervention design and delivery and the work environment influences (Burke & Hutchins 2007). Whilst individually all three factors provided influence over learning transfer, the workplace environment (that included the organisational learning culture) was able to influence the nature and character of the other two factors (Burke & Hutchins 2007).

Organisational rules are defined as contingency-specifying stimulus that detailed the relationship between antecedent, response and consequence (Johnson, Houmanfar & Smith 2010). Organisational rules are shared understandings among those involved that referred to enforced prescriptions about what actions are required, prohibited or permitted (Ostrom 2011). Organisational rules or working rules are the set of rules to which employees would make reference if asked to explain and justify their actions however rules are formulated in language and therefore share the problems of clarity, misunderstanding and misinterpretation (Ostrom 2011).

Explicit rules detail the likelihood of antecedents, behaviours and their consequences unambiguously, while implicit rules leave out some of the details leaving the result up to interpretation (Johnson, Houmanfar & Smith 2010). Rules structure human interactions and influence the way individuals behave and perform (Skoog 2005). Organisational rules therefore affected an individual’s actions and were used by employees to order their relationships and the community in which they operate (Ostrom 2011). Within the context of this study, rules are identified as the organisational processes for learning in which individuals were required to operate.

The influences of the organisational work environment need to be viewed from a systematic rather than linear multilevel perspective (Burke & Hutchins 2007).
This concept speculated that the challenge of transforming learning into application has a strong relationship with the multilevel or hierarchical nature and influence of an organisation’s learning culture. Burke and Hutchins (2007) support Reid’s (1987) belief that the application of learning was:

“...always vulnerable to the acquisitiveness and competitiveness of the institution” (Reid 1987, p. 12).

Both Reid’s (1987) and Bigg’s (2005) work on the learning process focused on the area of higher education as an institution, however relationships are able to be drawn with a variety of institutions including organisations. An institutional or organisational system has two aspects: firstly, the formal requirements established on an organisational basis of goals, objectives and outcomes; and secondly, the informal requirements or constraints of the bureaucracy, established but unstated history or organisational culture and the environment (Reid 1987).

Institutional constraints are the process of how the formal and informal requirements of the organisation influence an employee and that these constraints needed to be recognised and addressed as part of the organisational learning process (Reid 1987). In this process Reid (1987) advocated that a more holistic view was required when addressing organisational learning, as depicted by Bigg’s (2005) in his adapted 3P model of teaching and learning (see figure 3.6).

![Figure 3.6: Source: Bigg’s (2005) 3P Instructional System Model: Adapted by Bigg from the 1987 work of Reid.](image)

Decisions of learning design and the content alignment to institutional goals and objectives may be influenced and perhaps constrained by these formal and informal institutional factors (Reid 1987). Organisational learning and its effective
application depended on the attitudes, beliefs and culture of the social system within the institution (Reid 1987).

Supporting Reid’s suggestion Steiner (1998) added, efforts that engaged learners in organisational learning are further influenced by the ideological character or community of practice within the organisation. A community of practice is defined as any group of individuals who work together within the same environment for a period of time such as a team or group, a workplace department or organisation (Lave & Wenger 1991). Knowing and learning can therefore be expressed as engaging in the changing processes of human participation within a particular community of practice (Lave & Wenger 1991).

This suggested the organisational environment influenced an individual's learning and their ability to transfer and apply new learning. The organisational environment therefore provided this study's first overarching moderating variable, MV1.

3.3.5.3 Organisational stakeholders (MV2)
MV2 highlighted the influence organisational stakeholders had over an individual learner. This influence included the stakeholder ownership of learning and identified the accountability of stakeholders that influenced an individual’s learning transfer. Stakeholder theory and the role organisational stakeholders played within organisations have attracted much attention in literature over the past three decades (Danev 2010; Freeman 1984; Frooman 1999; Greenwood 2001; Post, Preston & Sachs 2002; Sloan 2007; Wu & Eweje 2008). Stakeholder accountability though has emerged as a more recent area of organisational literature, which developed from the area of corporate governance (Hall 2005).

Including or engaging stakeholders has brought knowledge about issues and needs into the planning process, enabled a better quality of decisions and created a common basis for harmonised actions (Danev 2010). Stakeholder engagement activities however and the engagement of stakeholders were under theorised areas (Greenwood 2007).

Many accounts of stakeholder activities focus on the attributes of organisations or the attributes of stakeholders rather than on the attributes of the relationship
between organisations and stakeholders (Frooman 1999; Greenwood 2001). The findings of Project RESPONSE, a study into stakeholder engagement, supported Greenwood’s statement and suggested stakeholder collaboration led to organisational change:

“Stakeholder engagement that is oriented toward collaboration with stakeholders can lead to learning, innovation and fundamental corporate transformation” (Sloan 2007, p. 25).

Project RESPONSE concluded that future scholarly investigations of stakeholder engagement that included a microanalysis into the effects of situation, context and motivation of stakeholders and what this meant for organisational performance would extend the field of knowledge (Sloan 2007). The implications of stakeholder engagement within organisations was an area under researched (Sloan 2007).

Post, Preston and Sachs (2002) added weight to Sloan’s suggestion by commenting that studies on the association between stakeholder engagement and organisational learning are rare. The state of current research into the importance of organisational stakeholders and their influence over learning transfer was summed up by Wu and Minyu (2008) who suggested the question of how stakeholder relations influenced a firm’s competence building though organisational learning was still under researched.

For any organisational endeavour the goal was to have stakeholder relationships that created sustainable high-performance organisations (Sloan 2007). Sloan recommended organisations that learnt from their stakeholders were in a position to attain benefits from them. Organisational stakeholder management was therefore an approach to strategic management (Freeman 1984). At all levels of the organisation a stakeholder approach identified influential stakeholders and provided guidance for addressing conflicting management interests (Greenwood & Uhlenbruch 2007). The benefits of stakeholder participation in organisational planning are an increased sense of ownership, greater support for the project, linked planning with development and provided a mechanism for communication (Danev 2010).
The key theme in both organisation theory and strategic management was corporate governance and included the efforts of corporate stakeholders to monitor and regulate managers (Hall 2005). Organisational theories such as agency theory (Eisenhardt 1989a; Fama 1980; Fama & Jensen 1983; Jensen & Meckling 1976) and stewardship theory (Davis, Schoorman & Donaldson 1997) were unable to completely capture the full range of motivations and behaviours of high-ranking organisational actors (Hall 2005). Accountability theorists supported organisational theories, however highlighted the impact of accountability on individual actors (Hall 2005).

Accountability models that included elements of rewards and punishments, individual responsibility and individual expectations conceptualised that accountability was an extrinsic process influencing individual actors reminiscent of each actor being under evaluation from an audience (Cummings & Anton 1990). One such model, the social consistency model of accountability, suggested accountability was identified as a state of mind and not as a state of affairs (Tetlock 1992). The model hypothesised the acceptability heuristic (acts that were most acceptable to the audience), pre-emptive self-criticism (occurred when actors have not discerned the views of their audience) and retrospective rationality (anticipation of relevant audience reaction) also highlighted the influential extrinsic nature of the evaluating audience (Tetlock 1992). Expanding on Tetlock’s (1992) concept of audience, Schlenker et al’s (1994) accountability pyramid is discussed.

The accountability pyramid rose out of the three base elements of Schlenker et al’s responsibility triangle (Schlenker et al. 1994) (see figure 3.7). The three base elements of the responsibility triangle were described as: firstly, the prescriptions that guided an actor’s conduct and the guidelines individuals abided by, as well as the principles of organisational expectations and rules; secondly, the identity images that were relevant to an event and prescriptions and that described the actor’s roles, qualities, convictions and aspirations; and thirdly, an event that had occurred or was about to occur that was relevant to the prescriptions that linked the act and the influence of the roles to the expectations of the individual.
Figure 3.7: Adapted from Schlenker et al., (1994).

In developing the accountability pyramid Schlenker et al. brought into play a fourth element, the term audience (Schlenker et al. 1994). Schlenker et al. supported Cummings and Anton (1990) and Tetlock (1992) and believed the element of audience provided guidance to assess an actor’s, or group of actors, degree of accountability over the three elements of the responsibility triangle (Schlenker et al. 1994) (see figure 3.8).

Figure 3.8: Adapted from Schlenker et al., (1994).

Unlike other accountability models such as Cummins & Anton (1990) and Tetlock (1992) that included the term audience within the description of the elements of their models, Schlenker et al. (1994) added the evaluating audience to the responsibility triangle in the form of looking down and appraising the
configuration of the elements and linkages. An evaluating audience composed of an individual or a group of individuals and that different evaluating audiences may vary in their assessment of the relevant expectation, roles or actions of individuals (Schlenker et al. 1994).

Support for this study's inclusion of Schlenker et al. (1994) accountability pyramid in addressing learning transfer issues came from Burke and Hutchins (2007) who recommended future learning transfer research grounded in established theories such as Schlenker et al. (1994) would help researchers take a more multidimensional perspective of learning transfer.

One of the functions of the accountability process was to reach conclusions about the nature of the elements and linkages in cases in which assessment or evaluation was warranted (Schlenker et al. 1994). Accountability models speculated that evaluation by an individual or a group from an extrinsic audience perspective was possible (Cummings & Anton 1990; Schlenker et al. 1994; Tetlock 1992).

In context to this study, the term audience is represented by a group of individuals, the learner's organisational stakeholders. These stakeholders included a learner's senior leadership team, manager, learning and development professionals and peers that provided levels of influence and support for organisational learning and therefore enabled or limited an individual's ability to transfer and apply their workplace learning. Organisational stakeholders (MV2) provided this study's second overarching moderating variable for the investigation of organisational learning transfer.

3.3.5.4 Organisational Actions (MV3)
MV3 explored literature on organisational actions as individual learner motivation and the perceived versus actual behavioural control of individuals. Within social contexts such as organisations, differences in motivation and personal growth resulted in people being more self-motivated, energised and integrated in their situation or domain (Ryan & Deci 2000b). Different motivations reflected differing degrees to which the value and regulation of the requested behaviour had been internalised and integrated (Ryan & Deci 2000b).
Bates and Khasawneh (2005) explored the issue of organisational actions evidencing supportive learning transfer climates were consistent with organisational cultures that believed in and valued learning as an adaptive strategy. This suggested that the opposite also occurred, in that organisational cultures which devalued learning, or were unsupportive of learning, created a less than positive learning transfer climate.

A study into individual behaviour change intentions and actions suggested where participants perceived that they had control over their learning transfer, it better reflected the extent of actual control (Fife-Schaw, Sheeran & Norman 2007). The study concluded strategies that increased an individual’s actual control over their behaviour generated temporally stable as well as strong learning intentions. This prompted individuals to form implementation intentions that identified the when, where and how of behavioural striving in advance and therefore vital in ensuring individuals bridged the intention-behaviour gap (Fife-Schaw, Sheeran & Norman 2007).

The best predictors of new behaviour were motivations followed by an individual’s intention to change their behaviour (Ajzen 2002). This suggested that intentions were the immediate antecedent of behaviour (Ajzen 2002). According to the theory of planned behaviour (TpB) (see figure 3.9 below), a behaviour change was achieved by demonstrating how motivation was first created through beliefs, and secondly how perceptions of control influenced behaviour both directly and indirectly (Ajzen 2002).

Three factors influenced a learner’s beliefs over the transfer and application of new learning: firstly, the opinions of significant others; secondly, a learner’s motivation; and thirdly, a learner’s perceived control or personal ability to apply new learning (Ajzen 2002). This suggested a positive or negative learning intention influenced the learner’s motivation before learning occurred (Ajzen 2002). Ajzen further offered that the strength of these intentions and the accuracy of a learner’s perceived behavioural control prior to new learning were significant indicators of how well a learner was capable of applying their new learning.
A substantial gap has remained between intentions and behaviour and intentions to change a behaviour were not always translated into action (Sheeran & Trafimow 2003). One important factor offered by Ajzen (1991) was what he termed ‘intention viability’, which referred to the idea that the realisation of intentions, as a result of an individual’s perceived behavioural control, was likely to occur only if the person possessed the actual control over the behaviour change and was therefore able to initiate learning transfer. Individuals could have inflated perceptions of their control over the learning transfer process or their ability to apply new learning, however the greater an individual’s actual control moderated the intension-behaviour relationship (Sheeran & Trafimow 2003).

TpB informed this study’s third moderating variable (MV3) however this research extended TpB to include Ajzen’s (1991) acknowledged limitation of his model. Ajzen (1991) noted but did not include actual behavioural control. This acknowledged limitation of actual behavioural control was greyed out in the TpB model (see figure 3.9). This limitation was as a result of Ajzen’s (1991) defined intention for the theory of planned behaviour which he described as:

“TpB was aimed at exploring the idea of an individual trying to perform a given behaviour and therefore not as a model for identifying actual behaviour” (Ajzen 1991, p. 182; note 1).

Sheeran, Trafimow and Armitage (2003) commented on this limitation to the theory of planned behaviour and suggested the fundamental path to a behaviour change was the level of actual behavioural control:
“Perhaps the most serious implication for the theory of planned behaviour concerns the status of the direct path from perceived behavioural control to behaviour” adding, “the perceived behavioural control-behaviour relation is not causal, the real causal determinant of behaviour is actual behavioural control not planned behavioural control” (Sheeran & Trafimow 2003, p. 408).

Successful performance of behaviour depended upon the degree of control an individual had over internal and external factors which interfered with the execution of an intended action (Ajzen & Madden 1985). Ajzen and Madden further pointed out an individual’s predictive ability diminished when the behaviour was influenced by factors over which they have limited control.

This suggested an individual’s intentions and actions were altered by intrinsic and extrinsic influences. An organisational learner’s positive or negative motivation to apply their new learning may be transformed by external factors including the actions of others within the organisation. Organisational actions (MV3) provided this study’s third overarching moderating variable for the investigation of learning transfer within organisations.

3.3.5.5 Alignment of supporting theory and models
In this chapter, three models have been presented that supported each of this study’s three moderating variables MV1, MV2, and MV3. These variables informed the development of an adapted activity system analytical framework as this study’s research instrument for investigating organisational learning transfer. They were Biggs’s (2005) adapted 3P model of teaching and learning, Schlenker et al. (1994) accountability pyramid and Ajzen’s (1991) theory of planned behaviour.

The learning transfer literature presented in Chapter 2 identified theories, models and studies into organisational barriers, which have been further supported by the three models above. Drawing from these authors and models, this study’s inclusion of three moderating variables (MV1, MV2, and MV3) in developing a research framework as the research instrument has been presented. This journey is illustrated in the graphic below (see figure 3.10).
Presented in table 3.4 below are factors from the three supporting models, discussed and illustrated above. Identified and drawn together in this table (3.4) are factors from Biggs (2005), Schlenker et al.(1994), Ajzen (1991), Vygotsky’s cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) published by Leont’ev (1978) and how they align with activity system theory (Engestrom 1999) and this study’s adapted activity system analytical framework.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Individual Learner</td>
<td>Learning Presage or Climate: The expectations of the student's level of ability and motivation, and the teacher’s procedures and teaching objective.</td>
<td>Prescriptions: The expectations of the individual: Includes working within rules, laws, moral and corporate codes of conduct and/or regulations.</td>
<td>Individual beliefs: The perceived value of the learning forms part of the expectation of the learner.</td>
<td>Subject: The context, item or individual under which the activity is being investigated.</td>
<td>Subject (The Organisational Learner) and Environment: Draws together the learner as the subject and the expectations, constraints, and rules both formal and informal within which they are required to work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder Influences</td>
<td>Processes and Approaches to Learning: The influence of others over the learner, and decisions of how to proceed through the learning.</td>
<td>Identity: The individual’s roles, qualities and commitments relevant to the situational context.</td>
<td>Normative Beliefs and Subjective norms: The views, influence and roles of significant others including that of the stakeholders.</td>
<td>Mediating Artefact/Tool: How a mediating artefact/tool may influence an individual’s actions, knowledge and behaviour.</td>
<td>Community (Roles) and Mediating Artefact/Mediating Tool (Learning Intervention): How the roles of the learner and that of the key stakeholder’s may influence the individual when moving through the mediating artefact/tool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderating Actions</td>
<td>Product and Learning Transfer: The actions of transferring learning into facts and skills.</td>
<td>Events: Actions of the individual, and the units of action that individuals are measured on by others (e.g. employee performance reviews).</td>
<td>Perceived behavioural control: The learner’s pre-conceptions of their ability to transfer and apply new learning.</td>
<td>Intrinsic Action: Vygotsky believed that an individual’s thoughts and learning did not travel directly from A to B, rather was influenced by other factors, and therefore may travel A through X to B.</td>
<td>Division of Labour (Actions): The actions of the individual as a result of managerial influence (i.e. the influence managers have to alter a learner’s perceived behavioural control and therefore mediate their actual behavioural control and their level of learning transfer).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Research Instrument: The Adapted Activity System Analytical Framework</td>
<td>MV1: The Influence of the Institution: How the environment, culture, and history of the institution may influence the learning, design, process, and behavioural objectives.</td>
<td>MV2: The Influence of the Audience: How others may provide overarching influence over an individual’s behaviour and learning using prescriptions (expectations), identity (roles) and events (actions).</td>
<td>MV3: Action/behavioural control: The learner’s perceived versus actual ability to transfer and apply new learning once influencing extrinsic factors of organisational actions have been considered.</td>
<td>The Object: The inclusion of one or many mediating artefact/tools may result in extrinsically influencing an individual’s behaviour and learning.</td>
<td>The Object (Learning Transfer): Uses a mediating artefact or tool to influence the subject - object interrelationship, and determine how the influence of intrinsic and extrinsic variables including organisational environment (MV1), organisational stakeholders (MV2) and organisational actions (MV3) guide the learner’s level of learning transfer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes for the Learner</td>
<td>Outcome of Institutional Constraints: Organisational environment influencing the level of learning transfer resulting in the application of workplace learning.</td>
<td>Resultant Outcome: NB: Although not stated in the model the ‘outcome’ of the model element ‘audience’ ultimately influences the individual in their application of new behaviours and/or learning.</td>
<td>Outcome of Motivation and Intentions: The level of an Individual’s intrinsic motivation and intentions corresponds with the level of application of that new behaviour.</td>
<td>An Individual’s Desired Outcome: The subject’s, or learner’s, predetermined or desired outcome.</td>
<td>Outcome of Improved Learning Transfer Rate: The level of learning transfer influences the application of workplace learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4: Source: Author: Supporting Theories and Models Informing the Moderating Variables (MV1, MV2, and MV3) of the Research Instrument.
These theories and models provided parallels and support for the development and adoption of this study’s moderating variables (MV1, MV2 and MV3). These parallels further supported the adapted activity system analytical framework as this study’s research instrument:

- **MV1** included the organisational environment, learning processes, learning design, and organisational learning culture which offered parallels with Biggs’s (2005) influence of the institution

- **MV2** included the factors of the influence of the audience or organisational stakeholders and the accountability of these stakeholders which drew parallels with Schlenker’s et al. (1994) influence of the audience

- **MV3** included the influence of organisational actions that mediated the learning transfer climate and the level of an individual’s motivation. This aligned with Ajzen’s (Ajzen 1991) motivation–intention interrelationship and perceived versus actual behavioural control.

The aligned factors in table 3.4 identified theory and model parallels for this study’s research design and provided support for the inclusion of moderating variable one (MV1) organisational environment, moderating variable two (MV2) organisational stakeholders and moderating variable three (MV3) organisational actions.

### 3.3.5.6 Adapted research instrument

This study’s investigation of the learning transfer literature supported Esque and McCausland’s (1997) proposition from Chapter 2 that responsibility for learning transfer fell into the grey area between trainer, trainees and management. For the purpose of investigating and exploring this grey area, a research instrument was required. As discussed above the research instrument needed to isolate responsibilities from many sources of organisational activity within parameters that questioned intrinsic and extrinsic influences affecting individuals. The research instrument selected was the activity system analytical framework. Chapter 2 further offered authors that suggested multiple mini-scale barriers that influenced organisational learning transfer and the application of learning.
In addressing the Holton (1997) and Devos, Dumay et al. (2007) recommendation of the need for a simplified learning transfer diagnostic, this research adapted an activity system analytical framework. In answer to these calls for a shortened and simplified learning transfer research instrument, this study presented three interrelated learning transfer mini-scale constructs MV1, MV2, and MV3. These three moderating variables included overarching learning transfer barriers and influential learning transfer factors identified in the literature as discussed above and in Chapter 2.

Engestrom’s (1987) activity system analytical framework was adapted as the framework for this study’s research design and therefore research instrument. With supportive literature from Chapter 2 and behavioural and organisational models identified above, this study presents its research instrument (see figure 3.11).

![Figure 3.11: Adapted by Author from Engestrom (1987)](image)

The adapted activity system analytical framework provided a research design process for investigating organisational factors influencing learning transfer. This
research instrument further provided a method for developing interview questions, which guided the data collection and data coding process and provided alignment for the analysis of data.

The double ended arrows within the adapted activity system analytical framework triangle, identified in figure 3.11, suggested contradictions between each of the variables that could be used for problem solving within a system of activity (Barab, Evans & Baek 2004). These identified contradictions guided the development of appropriately aligned questions (Barab, Evans & Baek 2004) that were used in this study to explain and resolve organisational issues. The research instrument’s interconnecting arrows provided the method for interrogating the framework’s variables by forming sub-activity triangles as further discussed in 3.4.2.4. The process of data collection will now be outlined.

3.4 Data Collection

3.4.1 Introduction
Researchers provided strong guidance in determining what data to collect and the strategies for analysing the data (Yin 1994). Regardless of the topic of interest or the sample size, researchers needed to have a focus on the systematic collection of specific data (Mintzberg 1979).

A notational structure for interview question forming was an approach that was able to be used for developing a naturalistic inquiry by structuring the development of interview questions and as a process or guide for data analysis (Mwanza 2002).

Mwanza's (2002) question development structure was retained in this study, however Mwanza’s notational structure was adapted to align with this study’s research objectives and Mwanza’s 8-step process for question development was similarly re-aligned into a nine-step process. This adapted interview question forming process is presented in this chapter and includes the following procedures this study used for investigating learning transfer issues within organisations:

- A nine-step mapping process for early phase activity system design was used to identify the direction, language and situated contradictions within
this study’s adapted activity system analytical framework. This nine-step mapping process identified the influences over an organisational learner’s (the subject) ability to transfer their learning (the object).

- With the activity system design identified, this study adapted Mwanza’s (2002) notational structure with sub-activity triangles (discussed in 3.4.2.4 below) aligned to the direction, language and situated contradictions of this research.

- The sub-activity triangles of the activity system analytical framework therefore provided indicators used as a guide for question development within context.

- With these three procedures in place, the process for collecting interview data specifically aligned to this study’s first research objective emerged. Following data collection, these procedures enabled initial alignment and coding of research data for analysis.

It was therefore possible for researchers to use activity theory to formulate research questions, which directly informed choices made prior to and during data collection (Whitefield 2004).

Outlined in this section is the process of developing the research interview questions using the research instrument as a guide and as the approach to codify emergent research data.

3.4.2 **Activity system interview question development**

3.4.2.1 **Introduction**

The activity system language was expressed by Engestrom (1987) as having four levels. The primary level identified the six variables within the activity system triangle and their contradictions. The secondary level identified the contradictions between multiple sub-triangle variables. The tertiary level contradictions occurred when the activity was remodelled into new ways of working. The quaternary level identified the contradictions that existed between each of the remodelled activity systems.
The four levels were later developed by Engestrom into an activity system checklist (Kaptelinin, Nardi & Macaulay 1999). The activity checklist is an instrument based on activity theory directly aimed at understanding activities during early phases of activity system design (Barab, Evans & Baek 2004). The checklist was a general tool meant to work in different design situations with items on the checklist, however not to be used in every case, rather as a selection of statements to be drawn from (Manker & Arvola 2011). This suggested adapting to context was an important consideration. From the emergent literature, identified in Chapter 2, this researcher adapted for context the three overarching moderating variables (MV1, MV2 and MV3) and the mini-scale learning transfer factors within the research instrument for this study’s investigation.

### 3.4.2.2 Adapting Mwanza’s 8-step mapping process

No generally accepted methodology for using the concepts and principles of activity theory exists; however many researchers and practitioners have designed their individual methods and research processes (Barab, Evans & Baek 2004). Engestrom (1987) offered a four step process of analysing interactions as contradictions as discussed above, Jonassen and Rohrer-Murphy (1999) recommend a six step process, whilst Mwanza (2001) opted for an eight step method for developing activity system interrogation. Based on the latter 8-step model (see table 3.5) this study adopted and adapted the Mwanza model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Identify the...</th>
<th>Questions to Ask</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>What sort of activity am I interested in?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Objective (Object)</td>
<td>Why is the activity taking place?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>Who is involved in carry out this activity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>By what means are the subjects carrying out this activity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td>Rules</td>
<td>Are there cultural norms, rules, and regulations governing the performance of this activity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 6</td>
<td>Division of Labour</td>
<td>Who is responsible for what when carrying out this activity, and how are the roles organised?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 7</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>What is the environment in which the activity is carried out?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 8</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>What is the desired outcome from this activity?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3.5: 8-Step Model (Mwanza 2001)*
This eight step mapping process is a method for early phase activity system design (Mwanza 2002). Mwanza's activity system notational structure is an approach where each of the activity system analytical framework variables play a role in identifying the direction, language and situated contradictions (Mwanza 2002). The interpretation, interrogation and mapping of this study's adapted activity system analytical framework included the selection process of a suitable diagnostic. This study based the development of its interview questions on Mwanza's (2001) 8-step mapping process, however developed and adapted a further step into Mwanza's activity system interrogation questions.

### 3.4.2.3 Adapted nine step mapping process

The 8-step process offered by Mwanza (2001) was unable to fully address the scope of this study's research objectives. To address these issues Mwanza's question development structure was retained, however Mwanza's notational structure was adapted and a further step was added, step 6, therefore aligning the development of the activity system interview questions within the context of this study.

Each of the nine steps enabled this study to acquire basic knowledge about the situation, allowed questions to be answered in relation to the situation being examined and focused the research instrument in context. The nine-step mapping process (see table 3.6) developed for this study is outlined.
The nine-step mapping process provided clarity to the research instrument design by relating contextual activity to each of the framework’s variables. The method of applying this focus in identifying interview questions is now discussed.
3.4.2.4 Adapting an activity system notational structure

Presented is this study’s question development process designed to break down the situated activity system triangle into smaller and more manageable units or sub-activity triangles (Mwanza 2001). This process, termed an activity notation or an activity system notational structure, provided a linear approach to the development of qualitative interview questions (Mwanza 2001). Questions are able to be formed by using the double ended arrows in an activity system that link each of the framework variables with a sub-activity triangle identified in the activity notational structure (Mwanza 2001). The selection of this process aligned with Engestrom’s (1987) primary and secondary levels language of contradictions discussed above. For example, in table 3.7, the first line item Subject-Tool-Object formed a sub-activity triangle on the research instrument that identified a question as to their relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-activity</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub-activity</td>
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<td>Sub-activity</td>
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<td>Sub-activity</td>
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<td>Sub-activity</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.7: Source: Based on Mwanza’s (2002) Notational Structure

As defined in this adapted process and in context to this study, this first question highlighted how the subject (the workplace learner) was influenced by the tool (the learning intervention) in obtaining the object (learning transfer). This formed a sub-activity triangle for question development where an interrelationship could be identified (see figure 3.12).
Similarly, the second line item in table 3.7 above, *Subject-Rules-Object*, formed another sub-activity triangle question of how was the subject (the workplace learner) influenced by rules (the organisational environment - MV1) in obtaining the object (learning transfer) (see figure 3.13) and so on down the six line items identified in this study’s adapted notational structure.
These contradictions or interrelationships within each of the analytical framework variables allowed for specific interview questions to be developed aligned to each of the sub-activity triangles, which explored this study’s first research objective.

The adapted activity system analytical framework therefore provided the research design framework that guided the development of interview question using a notational structure. Each sub-activity triangle therefore suggested an interrelationship within context that provided the researcher with the research design for developing each of the interview questions.

3.4.2.5 Isolating interview questions for sub-activity triangles
Each interview question was developed in line with this notational structure process. The sub-activity triangle illustrated in figure 3.12 above of subject (the workplace learner), artefact or tool (learning intervention) and object (learning transfer) identified a sub-activity triangular relationship. As discussed above this sub-activity triangular relationship, for example, provided the research design or
process for forming questions. Within this example, the question forming process identified three interview questions (see figure 3.14). The three interview questions Q3, Q7, and Q12 were developed within context for the current research (see annotated interview question development process at Appendix I).

![Activity System Analytical Framework with interview Questions Identified](image)

*Figure 3.14: Adapted by Author from Engestrom (1987) Activity System Analytical Framework with interview Questions Identified.*

In the second example discussed and illustrated above (see figure 3.13), the subject (the workplace learner), rules (MV1) and object (learning transfer) sub-activity triangle was identified. This sub-activity triangle provided five interview questions Q4, Q9, Q13, Q15, and Q16. The process of how this study developed these interview questions within context is described below.

### 3.4.2.6 Adapted activity system notational structure for question development

Mwanza (2002) developed the notational structure into six exploratory activity questions. Each of the six questions enquired about contradictions between the subject, the moderating variables (MV1, MV2 and MV3) including artefacts or tools
and the object of the research (Mwanza 2001). The six notational structure questions provided a guide for developing questions within context (see table 3.8).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adapted Sub-Activity Triangles</th>
<th>Pointers for Question Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject - Tool - Object</strong></td>
<td>What tools does the subject use to satisfy the objective and how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject - Rules - Object</strong></td>
<td>What rules affect the way the subject satisfies the objective and how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject - Community - Object</strong></td>
<td>How does the community affect the way the subject satisfies the objective and how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject - Division of Labour - Object</strong></td>
<td>How does division of labour affect the way the subject satisfies the objective?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rules - Community - Object</strong></td>
<td>What rules affect the way the community satisfies their objective and how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rules - Division of Labour - Object</strong></td>
<td>How does the division of labour affect the way the rules satisfies the objective?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.8: Source: Based on Mwanza’s (2002) Pointers for Question Development within a Notational Structure

These questions were used as pointers that indicated what to look for prior to or during observational studies, in questionnaires and interviews as triggers that helped to decide what questions to ask (Mwanza 2001). Mwanza further recommended using these pointers as a guide that set the criteria for the development of one or more interview questions in each of the six sub-activity triangles.

Due to the additional mini-scale factors identified in the literature and included in each of this study's moderating variables (MV1, MV2, and MV3) more than one interview question was required to address each sub-activity triangle as discussed in 3.4.2.5 and illustrated in figure 3.14. The question development process presented and adopted for this study's research design that included adapting Mwanza's (2001) notational structure has been presented and discussed. The next step and subsequent process for question development (Mwanza 2002) is discussed below.
This study aligned these question development pointers as illustrated in table 3.8 above into the final step of the activity system notational structure interview question development process.

Depicted in table 3.9 is the alignment of each of the sub-triangles and question development pointers discussed above together with the emergent interview questions in context to this study (annotated version of the interview question developed process has been included at Appendix I).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adapted Notational Structure</th>
<th>Pointers for Question Development</th>
<th>Emergent Research Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject – Tool – Object</strong></td>
<td>What tools does the subject use</td>
<td>1. What internal support was available to the learner to complete the training event?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to satisfy the objective and how?</td>
<td>2. How were the learning objectives, outcomes, organisational goals, and the learning process communicated?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. How did this provide an understanding of both individual and organisational learning value?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject - Rules - Object</strong></td>
<td>What rules affect the way the</td>
<td>1. What organisational environment and individual performance expectations were placed on the learner to complete the learning intervention and transfer new learning to the workplace?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>subject satisfies the objective</td>
<td>2. How did the organisational environment, i.e. learning culture and rules, influence the learner’s motivation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and how?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject - Community - Object</strong></td>
<td>How does the community affect</td>
<td>1. What role did the organisational stakeholder’s play prior to, during, and following the learning intervention?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the way the subject satisfies the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>objective and how?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject - Division of Labour - Object</strong></td>
<td>How does division of labour</td>
<td>1. Prior to the learning intervention, describe your perceptions of your ability to transfer your new learning into your workplace?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>affect the way the subject</td>
<td>2. What issues of organisational control affected the learner’s ability to transfer new learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>satisfies the objective?</td>
<td>3. How did the organisational learning transfer climate affect the learner’s ability to transfer new learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Following the learning intervention, explain your actual ability to transfer the new learning into your workplace?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rules - Community - Object</strong></td>
<td>What rules affect the way the</td>
<td>1. What is the view of training within the organisation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>community satisfies their</td>
<td>2. In what ways do the organisational stakeholders influence the transfer of new learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>objective and how?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rules - Division of Labour - Object</strong></td>
<td>How does the division of labour</td>
<td>1. How does the organisational learning transfer climate influence an individual’s learning transfer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>affect the way the rules satisfies the objective?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3.9: Source: Based on Mwanza’s (2002) Notational Structure and Pointers for Question Development*
3.4.2.7 Extending interview questions
The process of developing the final 13 questions above was designed in a way to stimulate interviewee responses. During early discussion with the contact person from each of the organisations researched, it became evident that the 13 interview questions may encourage interviewees to provide very open dialogue of their particular learning transfer process experiences. It was agreed to include three further questions relating to; interviewees’ coaching and mentoring experiences, their opinions on the effectiveness of their manager's current approach or indeed their own approach that enabled or limited learning transfer and the potential for improving that approach. These further three questions supported this investigation of the influence of the audience over and employee’s learning transfer and therefore were included into this study’s moderating variable two (MV2) organisational stakeholders.

The data analysis and results from responses to the primary interview questions and these further extended interview questions are outlined in Chapter 4, 5 and 6 with discussions and conclusions on emergent themes considered in Chapter 7. Two additional open questions allowed interviewees to add further information if needed (the 18 final interview questions are in Appendix III).

3.4.3 Research participants and criteria
Thirty-one interviewees from different levels of management from the five Australian organisations voluntarily participated in this research. The participation of these interviewees was arranged by the contact person within each organisation and each interviewee was identified as meeting the research criteria below. The contact person in each organisation was issued with this criterion by the researcher to assist them in the research interviewee identification process:

- Full time employee of the organisation (the percentage of male to female was not a critical factor for this research)
- Employed with the organisation for more than 2 years
- Aged between 25 and 65 years
- More than 5 years working experience
- Completed one or more internal training courses within the past 6 to 24 months
- Participants who had completed an internal professional development interventions were preferred but not essential
- Agreed to be interviewed on a voluntary basis and were prepared to sign a research participation consent and confidentiality form.

Interviewees were employed in different departments or areas of the business, however at least one employee from each organisation was volunteered from the learning and development department. This was to gain in-depth insight into the internal process used for designing, developing and delivering learning within each of the selected organisations.

3.5 Research organisations

3.5.1 Organisation A
Organisation A operated within a conservative arm of the consumer services industry and had a hierarchical business model with high resistance to change. This organisation was selected to explore the implications of this resistance on individual learning and how these organisation influences influenced the learning transfer process. Interviews were conducted at branch offices in Sydney and Brisbane.

The five employees interviewed ranged from mid-management to junior executive levels, all but one had direct reports, with the remaining having between one and fifteen reports. Ages ranged between 25 and 65 and length of service between two and sixteen years (for further information see table 3.10).

3.5.2 Organisation B
This organisation was selected as it operated within the creative sphere of industry, that of market research. Organisation B used a flatter hierarchical structure and was considered by its employees as a high pressure, highly motivated, highly rewarding employer that emphasised the need for training.
Organisation B provided a rich research interest as it worked within an industry commonly thought of as at the forefront of new trends, innovation and organisational development. Interviews were conducted at the Sydney head office and branch offices in Melbourne.

The seven employees interviewed ranged from mid-management to junior executive levels, all but three had direct reports, those that had direct reports due in part to the flat organisations structure had between one and two reports. Ages ranged between 25 and 45 and length of service between two and ten years (see table 3.10).

3.5.3 Organisation C
Organisation C operated within the not-for-profit industry where employees expressed a strong sense of value that their employment was doing something humanitarianly worthwhile and therefore helped people toward a better way of life. Organisation C was selected for this alternative organisational not-about-profit perspective, the potential effect of this alternative approach on learning transfer and the influence of the CEO attempting to change the working culture of the organisation through training. Interviews were conducted at the Melbourne head office and branch offices in Melbourne and Brisbane.

The five employees interviewed ranged from upper mid-management to junior executive levels, all had direct reports of between two and fifteen employees. Ages ranged between 36 and 65 and length of service between six and eighteen years (see table 3.10).

3.5.4 Organisation D
This government department could be described as a competitive hierarchical environment of educated and generally motivated employees held in high regard by industry and was identified as having two perspectives on organisational change: firstly, the longer-term employees and senior management team appeared resistant to change; and secondly, the degree qualified younger employees, mid to lower management team and high achievers were opportunistic and upwardly mobile. Organisation D was selected due to this competitive work environment, the highly motivated work force driven by personal development and the
importance placed on personal and professional development training motivated by the CEO. Interviews were conducted at their Sydney head office only.

The six employees interviewed ranged from senior to junior executive levels, all but one had direct reports, with the remaining having between three and twenty. Ages ranged between 25 and 65 and length of service between six and twenty-four years (see table 3.10).

### 3.5.5 Organisation E

This organisation operated within the automotive industry, an industry more generally known for its processes and procedures. Organisation E was a hierarchical organisation, however valued innovation and proactive organisational development and was selected due to the recent importance placed on professional development training. Interviews were conducted at the Melbourne head office and branch offices via video conference in Sydney and Brisbane.

The eight employees interviewed ranged from senior to junior executive levels, all but three had direct reports, with the remaining having between one and fourteen reports. Ages ranged between 25 and 55 and length of service between two and twenty-three years (see table 3.10).

### 3.6 Data management

#### 3.6.1 Coding of research data

The five organisations researched and the 31 interviewees were assigned codes for each interview and all interview recordings and transcriptions only featured these codes. Each organisation and participating interviewee were assigned these codes and fictitious names to ensure participation confidentiality and anonymity and none of the research organisations were identified in the data, rather only by industry sectors and state locations.

The five research organisations were coded A to E and each interviewee was coded, for example 1 to 6. Each interviewee was further coded to identify their current role: firstly, as those employees having no direct reports were coded GE for general employee; secondly, those having direct reports were coded ME for management executives; and thirdly, those having responsibility for the area of
personal and professional development within the organisation were coded LD for Learning and Development.

Identified in table 3.10 below are the five organisation’s industry sectors, their interstate locations, interview dates and location, interview coding and relevant demographic information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study</th>
<th>Industry Sector</th>
<th>City Location</th>
<th>2011 Interview Dates</th>
<th>Interview Codes</th>
<th>Coded Interview Name</th>
<th>Direct Reports</th>
<th>Years at Company</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case Study A</td>
<td>Retail / Consumer Services</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>28th Sept</td>
<td>A1GE A2MSS</td>
<td>James Andrew</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45-55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>7th October</td>
<td>A3LD A4MSS A5MSS</td>
<td>Peter Terri Amy</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>36-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study B</td>
<td>Market Research</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>4th Oct</td>
<td>B1MSS B2LD B3GE B4MSS</td>
<td>Barbara Jean NERIDA Max</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>11th Oct</td>
<td>B5GE B6MSS B7MSS</td>
<td>Sandra Catherine Brown</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study C</td>
<td>Not-for-Profit</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>3rd November</td>
<td>C1MSS C2MSS</td>
<td>Cate Kristen</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>56-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>5th October</td>
<td>C3LD</td>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>36-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study D</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>26th October</td>
<td>D1MSS D2MSS D3MSS D4MSS</td>
<td>John Damon Tom Nick</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>27th October</td>
<td>D5LD D6MSS</td>
<td>Deb Robert</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>56-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study E</td>
<td>Motor Industry</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>2nd November</td>
<td>E1GE E2GE E3MSS E4LD E5MSS</td>
<td>David Sam Matthew Elliot Steve</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>46-55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>9th November</td>
<td>E6MSS E7MSS EBLD</td>
<td>Emily Susan Michael</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25-35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Coding Legend:**
LD = Learning and Development (6 interviewed)
MSS = Management and Supervisory Staff (20 interviewed)
GE = General Employee (5 interviewed)

Table 3.10: Source: Author - Interview coding and demographic matrix.
3.6.2 Obtaining research site and ethics approvals

Following university ethics approval (SUHREC 2011/158 - see ethics approval letter at Appendix VIII) the five research organisations were contacted and signed approvals that granted research participation (see research information sheet at Appendix V, organisation research consent form at Appendix VI and interviewee research consent form at Appendix VII). The process of selecting research interviewees that aligned with the research criteria was conducted by the internal contact person, however arranging interview times within the schedules of some of these interviewees was not a simple process.

Each interviewee was approached by the contact person within each organisation researched that matched the research criteria and agreed to volunteer for interview. Research interviewees were asked to provide honest and objective accounts of their beliefs and experiences when answering the research questions. The task of data collection was hampered by the fact that interviews were spread between the research organisations branch locations in three states, Brisbane - Queensland, Sydney - New South Wales and Melbourne - Victoria.

Once participating organisations and interviewees had signed research consent and confidentiality agreements the research interviews commenced. Each interviewee completed a research demographics questionnaire (see Appendix II) to obtain non-identifiable data for inclusion in table 3.10. All interviews were conducted between late September 2011 and early November 2011 to accommodate the schedules of participants. Transcriptions of the thirty-one digitally recorded interviews were completed by December 2011 with the coding and tabulation of data ready for data analysis completed by February 2012.

This study has maintained an ethical and unbiased approach to research. Highlighting issues of confidentiality and anonymity with interviewees allowed for a greater feeling of trust to exist, permitting participants to share deeper insights into the internal practices of their organisation.
3.7 Data Analysis

3.7.1 Introduction
This study provided detailed and rich descriptions of human beliefs and experiences across multiple data sources. This research further investigated regular patterns of human behaviour in data by sifting, coding and sorting data from interviews to explore and refine these patterns in what LeCompte and Goetz (1982) described as a recursive approach. Qualitative research is an open field where different researchers from several disciplines deal with social meanings and with the issue of understanding (Amozurrutia & Servos 2011). This study used a qualitative method for this social research that provided insights into organisational learning transfer to test, analyse and report on research objectives through the analysis of data from multiple organisations.

During the last two decades the use of computers and software for the analysis of data has become a relevant part of our daily landscape and has provided a basic device of social research even in relation to a qualitative approach (Amozurrutia & Servos 2011). The functions of Microsoft Windows 2010 were used as this study’s approach to qualitative data analysis. Interviews were transcribed into Microsoft Word documents with emergent themes and sub-factors tabulated into Microsoft Word tables that guided each stage of the analysis process. During this process each emergent theme and sub-factor was allocated a thematic code. This approach was a simple way of organising data using Microsoft Word tables as a tool for developing social narrative analysis (Amozurrutia & Servos 2011).

3.7.2 Process and Thematic Code Development for Data Analysis
Multifunction programs for managing and analysing qualitative text are widely available (Le Pelle 2004). For many qualitative research projects, Le Pelle suggested the native functions of full-featured word-processing programs can be used to perform many of the functions provided by dedicated qualitative data analysis (QDA) software such as NVivo and Atlas Ti.

A way to manage qualitative research effectively is to format transcripts for maximum coding efficiency in Microsoft Word and by using features of Word to facilitate the analysis of data for well-organised qualitative coding (Hahn 2008).
Ryan (2004) supported this approach and offered that coding and retrieval of QDA data could be done using Microsoft Word macros and that Microsoft Word can be used to perform these and other basic qualitative analysis functions.

Some researchers have been sceptical about using word processor functions for qualitative data analysis (Le Pelle 2004); particularly in regard to automating the retrieval of similarly coded passages, handling large numbers of codes or many references from codes to text, conceptualizing about relationships between codes and capturing data that may not be part of the texts themselves but rather facts about the study informants, documents or observations (Le Pelle 2004).

This scepticism may be appropriate suggesting that using the macro language built into programs such as Microsoft Word may require skills beyond the capacity of many users of word processors (Ryan 2004). The built-in functions of Microsoft Word, functions that do not require programming skill, are processes that do serve well for many qualitative research projects (Le Pelle 2004). It is acknowledged that dedicated QDA software excel in doing complex Boolean searches and in visualising data but these functions are not always needed for qualitative analysis (Le Pelle 2004).

Using Microsoft Word to analyse text from interview transcripts, focus groups, document reviews and open-ended survey questions among other sources of data are enabled by using Word functions such as tables, table sort, insert file, find or replace and insert comment (Le Pelle 2004). Microsoft Word table structures are powerful tools for data analysis and when using Microsoft Word to support qualitative data analysis the table structure acts as a database that can be used for analysis on its own (Miles & Huberman 1994). This study relied on Windows 2010 for the data coding process and emergent theme tabulation.

3.7.3 Validity and Reliability
Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure and therefore a measure is considered reliable if the same result is achieved repeatedly in excess of 80 percent of the original result (Sekaran & Bougie 2009). The process used in this research to address and ensure qualitative data analysis internal and external validity and reliability were category reliability and inter-judge reliability. Each is
defined within this section and discussed are the roles category reliability and inter-judge reliability performed in verifying data themes and thematic codes drawn from the interview data.

Category reliability is defined as an analyst's ability to formulate data categories and present these categories to competent judges for agreement on each category theme and the accurate presentation and population of data (Kassarjian 1977). Following the data collection process, all data was thematically coded into categories and sub-categories using Microsoft Word 2010 tables.

Inter-judge reliability, sometimes referred to as inter-rater reliability, is defined as the final review of the development of themes and the allocation of transcripts to those themes (Tashakkori et al. 1998). Any rigorous classification system should be inter-subjectively unambiguous as a measure of inter-judge reliability (Hunt 1983). Each of the category Word tables were populated with specific data having been drawn from interviewee’s comments.

To address the issues of category reliability and inter-judge reliability concerning interview data analysis two other researchers reviewed the thematic coding process and the allocation of interview data to each category and sub-category. Both researchers accepted this researcher's data analysis coding process as an accurate representation and allocation, to a measure in excess of 80 percent, of the collected interview data.

3.8 Conclusion
Chapter 3 presented a research methodology for exploring a social issue within multiple organisations. Naturalistic research inquiry was selected as ideally suiting this investigation of factors influencing learning transfer within organisations. Naturalistic inquiry provided an effective qualitative method for exploring ways individuals and their behaviours were influenced by their environment, ways individuals interpreted their beliefs and experiences and ways that investigated their personal meanings and perspectives. These principles aligned with this study's exploration of individual employee's beliefs and experiences of learning transfer within their organisation and then comparing the
corresponding perspectives of individuals within the other organisations researched.

Biggs’s adapted 3P model of teaching and learning informed this research through Biggs’s adaptation of Reid’s (1987) work in what Reid termed institutional constraints (see figure 3.6). These institutional constraints created environment barriers to learning transfer and the workplace application of learning (Biggs 2005). The methodology literature presented suggested institutional constraints, or the organisational environment (MV1), included organisational learning culture, perceptions of learning value, the processes for learning (rules) and learning alignment to individual and organisational goals were factors that influenced learning transfer.

The theoretical platform that guided this study’s MV2 was Schlenker et al. (1994) accountability pyramid (see figure 3.8). In developing the accountability pyramid from their previous model the responsibility triangle, Schlenker et al. brought into play a fourth element, the term audience (Schlenker et al. 1994). The term audience is referred to in this study as organisational stakeholders (moderating variable two - MV2). The term organisational stakeholders viewed as the community or the group that influenced a learner’s ability to transfer their learning into the workplace provided the platform for interviewees to comment on their beliefs and experiences of stakeholder ownership, influence and accountability for their learning and the level of learning support, follow up and coaching they received.

Ajzen’s (1991) theory of planned behaviour (TpB) provided the theoretical platform for this study’s moderating variable three (MV3) (see figure 3.9). Ajzen (2002) argued motivational actions to attend, learn from and apply new learning from training occurred as a result of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. An exploration of the intention – behaviour change gap and the interrelationship of perceived behavioural control versus actual behavioural control provided this study’s base for investigating factors of motivation, perceived versus actual behavioural control, the learning transfer climate and the effective workplace application of learning.
Activity theory emerged as a suitable framework for analysing social and cultural issues and provided a language to describe what individuals did within context (Mwanza 2001). Activity theory provided the means to overcome the limiting heritage of the Cartesian dichotomy that has misled literature into believing that individuals and their environment were able to be separated for analytical and synthetic activities (Barab, Evans & Baek 2004). From the review of the extant literature in Chapter 3 the identification and support for an activity system research instrument as this study's research design emerged. The activity system framework identified activity as the basic unit for studying human practices and what individuals did was reflected through actions as they interacted with their environment (Mwanza 2001).

Chapter 3 presented an activity system framework as a research design for this study's exploration of barriers to organisational learning transfer as discussed in chapter 2. The activity system analytical framework provided a lens for better coordinating the complex task of taking account of activity at a systemic level (Barab, Evans & Baek 2004). This process provided a research framework for this study's three moderating learning transfer variables (MV1, MV2, and MV3) identified in the literature. These moderating variables were adapted to an activity system analytical framework, which was presented as this study's research instrument.

An adapted structure was developed from Mwanza’s (2001) notational structure and 8-step process for the design and development of this study's interview questions. This design provided research focus and identified the subject-variable-object relationships of sub-activity triangles within this study's research instrument. The adapted notational structure provided focus, identified activity relationships and enabled alignment and direction for developing the research questions. Each of the interview questions were designed to provide participants an opportunity to comment on their personal experiences, offer perspectives of the organisation's management processes leading up to and following an internal professional development training and comment on how learning transfer and the application of workplace learning processes were managed within their respective organisations.
The methods used to address issues of data management, research ethics and confidentiality and anonymity for both research organisations and interviewees have been discussed. The five organisations researched were introduced and the interview selection criteria outlined, as was the method used for data coding and analysis.

To provide reader clarity of the following three analysis and results chapters (Chapter 4, 5 and 6), this researcher provides a brief review and introduction to each.

3.9 Introduction of Data Analysis and Results Chapters
The three objectives of this study, as discussed in chapters 1 and 2, were to investigate learning transfer within organisations: firstly, by exploring overarching learning transfer barriers as moderating factors influencing learning transfer within organisations; secondly, identifying a simplified methodology and process for examining learning transfer issues within organisations; and thirdly, from the analysis of data, attempt to provide an explanation for the gap between the reported high annual investments in organisational training and the suggested low learning transfer rates training produces. Chapter 4 (MV1), 5 (MV2), and 6 (MV3) address the first of this study's research objectives. The second and third research objectives are discussed in Chapter 7.

The models and concepts drawn from literature and outlined in Chapter 2 and 3 have been adapted into this study's activity system analytical framework to develop the research instrument. Each of the three moderating variables and support for their inclusion in the research instrument has been discussed and adopted as the research design methodology for interview question forming, capturing research data and as the process for research data analysis.

The following three chapters report research analysis and emergent results from the interview data on enabling or limiting factors of organisational learning transfer through the lenses of moderating variable one (MV1) organisational environment in Chapter 4, moderating variable two (MV2) organisational
stakeholders in Chapter 5 and moderating variable three (MV3) organisational actions in Chapter 6.

Within each of the three chapters, this study's adapted activity system analytical framework sub-triangles directed investigation of the research data from which analysis and results emerged in context. By way of introduction to each chapter, their sub-activity triangles are illustrated (see figure 3.15).
Figure 3.15: MV1, MV2, and MV3 (Sub-Activity Triangles) of the Adapted Activity System Analytical Framework.
The 31 research interviews produced a fertile source of data for analysis and represents selected quotations from individual managers and employees within each of the research organisations. The interviewee comments and quotations provided further understanding of the organisational learner (subject) - learning transfer (object) interrelationship by exploring moderating factors influencing their learning transfer. Chapter 4 (MV1), 5 (MV2) and 6 (MV3) therefore presents the research analysis and provides an overview of each chapter's results with supporting literature identified that aligned with several of the result outcomes and themes arising.
CHAPTER FOUR
Analysis and Results – Organisational Environment (MV1)

4.1 Introduction

MV1 centred on the impact of an organisational environment that influenced the learning transfer process. This included learning culture and individual and corporate expectations in the form of implicit or explicit rules over learning alignment, learning value and the processes for learning. An institutional or organisational system has two aspects: firstly, the formal requirements established on an organisational basis of goals, objectives and outcomes; and secondly, the informal requirements or constraints of the bureaucracy, established but unstated history or organisational culture and the environment (Reid 1987).

Efforts to engage learners in organisational learning are further influenced by the ideological character or community of practice of the organisation (Steiner 1998). A community of practice is defined as any group of individuals who work together within the same environment (Lave & Wenger 1991).

Support for the inclusion of the work environment as a factor influencing learning transfer has more recently been summarised in the findings of a study by Burke and Hutchins (2007) as the developing knowledge of the three primary factors influencing transfer: firstly, learning characteristics; secondly, learning intervention design and delivery; and thirdly, the work environment influences. Whilst individually all three factors influenced learning transfer, the workplace environment that included the organisational learning culture was able to influence the nature and character of the other two factors (Burke & Hutchins 2007).

As discussed in Chapter 2, organisational rules or working rules are the set of rules to which employees would make reference to if asked to explain and justify their actions, however rules are formulated in language and therefore share the problems of clarity, misunderstanding and misinterpretation (Ostrom 2011).
Within the context of this study, rules have been identified as the processes organisations use to design, develop, deliver and transfer organisational learning.

This study’s first moderating variable (MV1) speculated that an organisational environment that embraced a positive learning culture, aligned and designed learning to individual and corporate expectation and provided effective learning processes positively influenced the learning transfer process. This study further speculated that without these positive influences the opposite also occurred. MV1 therefore explored the learner – organisational learning environment – learning transfer interrelationship as illustrated in figure 4.1.

![Figure 4.1: Adapted by Author from Engestrom’s (1987) Activity System Analytical Framework.](image)

The analysis of the data presented below identified a range of organisational environment issues relevant to an individual employee’s beliefs and experiences when attempting to transfer and apply new workplace learning. These emergent issues included the organisational culture, hierarchy, seniority, time constraints and work pressures, communication, formal and informal rules in the form of training processes, isolating the value of training, the alignment of training to both individual and organisational needs and learning review and assessment.
4.2 Organisational Environment – MV1 Analysis

The rapidly changing nature of workplace practices within an organisational environment has demanded the ability to be constantly learning in the workplace (Goold 2006). The changes in organisational development practices have led to a requirement for different roles, approaches, skills and competencies in transferring learning (Goold 2006).

MV1 investigated consistencies with and extended the findings of Goold (2006). These consistencies recognised the way different internal organisational learning cultures operated in influencing learning transfer and how organisations identified and worked within these local values. This study further explored learning transfer within the context of Steiner’s (1998) organisational structure in addressing issues of learning transfer, Clarke’s (2002) issues of time constraints and work pressures, Starkey’s (1996) learning processes within organisations, Taylor and Russ-Eft et al. (2005) workplace environment as a learning context, Pfeffer’s (1997) mutual effects of the organisational environment and Baldwin and Ford’s (1988) recommendation to include work environment and learning design. These authors speculated that the challenge for individuals of transforming learning into application had a strong relationship with the structure, nature, extrinsic influence of the organisation and the organisational learning culture.

The concept of an organisational learning culture has become a popular one in recent years yet we still have little understanding of it outside the usually prescriptive exhortations that have been issued by a range of management gurus (Johnston & Hawke 2002). In a study of informational technology workers, Egan Yang et al. found that the organisational learning culture significantly predicted job satisfaction in the transfer of learning (Egan, Yang & Bartlett 2004). MV1 aimed to further this understanding by suggesting and conducting an exploration of the organisational environment as an influence that mediated learning transfer. Results discussed later in this chapter suggest acknowledging and addressing the organisational learning environment was a method for reducing learning transfer barriers.
Supporting this approach, Biggs (2003) posited that the expectations of the organisation on the learner’s level of ability influenced procedures, the learning design, the organisational learning processes and learning objectives as discussed in Chapter 2. The organisational environment further included working within rules [or processes], both formal and informal and within organisational expectations that continue to influence organisational learning culture (Burke & Hutchins 2007). Organisational rules were identified in this study as the processes organisations use to design, develop, deliver, transfer, and apply new workplace learning.

4.2.1 Organisational learning culture

Kopelman, Brief et al. (1990) suggested organisational culture referred to common beliefs, values and assumptions of organisational members that were shared organisation-wide. Extending on this suggestion, MV1 broadly analysed and offered emergent interview data on organisational learning culture. Kopelman, Brief et al. (1990) view was further supported by Johnston and Hawke (2002) who reported that organisational learning culture was seen as the existence of a set of attitudes, values and practices within the organisation that supported and encouraged the continuing process of learning for both the organisation and its members.

The literature from Chapter 2, defined organisational culture as the common beliefs, values and assumptions of organisational members that have built up over time, were shared organisation-wide and formed the organisation’s history (Sydow, Schreyogg & Koch 2005). The shared beliefs and experiences presented below concurred with what Sydow, Schreyogg et al. (2005) recommended, organisational history and therefore organisational culture mattered when attempting to alter the social processes through transformational change within organisations.

The analysis of data on organisational culture will now be discussed, commencing with interviewees’ opinions, beliefs and experiences on current learning trends within their organisations. Trends have been identified in the analysis as representations and manifestations of organisational cultural issues when looking
for themes in the data and have been supported by extracts from the transcriptions of interviews.

4.2.1.1 Trends for organisational learning culture
Interviewees mentioned their organisations were moving toward a more positive learning culture. This positive move was seen as an improved commitment by their organisations to sponsor broader areas of training and development that included a particular drive to improve the ‘soft skills’ such as leadership qualities within their organisations. In organisation C and E, Sam, Cate and Steve draw these observations together:

I think the training culture has dramatically changed in the last 18 months... Prior to that, there was basically no training on offer for internal staff... I’ve seen a genuine will to improve our internal staff’s skill set and build leaders from within rather than recruiting from the outside (Sam E2GE).

Particularly in the last two years there’s been a very strong move to more training... It’s seen as a way to improve the skills of the staff and to encourage a good culture (Cate C1MSS).

As a junior manager I now look back and see that there was a gap... I think what the company has done is terrific to actually try turning us back into a learning organisation (Steve E5MSS).

Not all interviewees however shared this perception. Several organisations seemed to be experiencing difficulties in addressing this change. During the analysis of interview data, it became evident that resistance to organisational change or personal change was a recurring theme expressed by many interviewees. Barbara commented on the difficulties her organisation was experiencing in attempting to improve their organisational learning culture:

... we sometimes get stuck in a rut of ‘This is how we’ve always done it’ so it’s sometimes a little bit more difficult to apply something new, or a new way of doing something (Barbara B1MSS).

Nerida’s opinion raised the possibility of internal contradictions that were dividing sections of her organisation. This suggested a mediation of any positive move toward improvement organisational learning culture:
I think there are real divisions internally in terms of how people see training - there’s one perception that it’s beneficial, it’s about your own growth, benefit to the company, it’s interesting, there’s always something new to learn - I know that’s how a lot of people and most of the management feel about it within the organisation - But then there are others who it just feels like we’re ticking boxes. People can get a bit weary of it like ‘Oh, another training course...’ Particularly those [courses] that take you away from your work from a full day or something like that... So there’s the... ‘Yes, it’s brilliant’ and then you get the ‘Oh, I can’t believe I’m going to have to do this all day and have to work late to be able to overcome the time (Nerida B3GE).

Organisational culture has been described as one of the most powerful and stable forces operating within organisations and there has been scant scholarly attention to the influence of organisational culture on training effectiveness (Bunch 2007). The culture and history of the institution influenced a learner’s motivational and behavioural objectives (Reid 1987). The interviewee comments above suggested there are barriers to and mixed perceptions of how organisations are dealing with the issue of changing an organisation’s culture and that the organisational environment did influence the learning culture. Comments supported the third factor of Goold’s (2006) ten barriers to learning transfer, as presented in Chapter 2, that anxiety and fear of change resulted in defensiveness.

outlined below are the personal views and experiences of interviewees on how their organisations were addressing these barriers and perceptions. The opinions and experiences expressed further identify interviewee beliefs on how these perceptions influenced their efforts to transfer their learning into workplace application and provided support for MV1.

4.2.1.2 Organisational hierarchy learning culture support and commitment
Learning culture was ultimately the responsibility of the senior leadership team, perhaps their most important responsibility and therefore the product of strategic decisions about the role of an organisation, the needs of its stakeholders and the best way to reconcile the two in a given environment (Hobby 2004). Culture was leadership and leadership was originally the source of the beliefs and values that motivate a group moving toward dealing with its internal and external problems
(Schein 1997). If what a leader proposed worked and continued to work, what was once only the leader’s assumption would gradually become a shared assumption (Schein 1997).

Nick provided an explanation for his organisation’s (organisation D) positive approach to organisational learning culture and suggested his current CEO’s beliefs and influences had developed the organisation’s shared assumptions:

The CEO has more of a people focus now than ever before - Well to my knowledge than ever before but I’ve only been here for six years myself... The previous CEO I had some overlap with was very procedural and very much about the work itself - The new CEO is very much more about the people so he believes that the level of influence you can have and the level of value you can deliver as a functionary group depends on the way that people are actually taking the business forward (Nick D4MSS).

Dealing with issues relating to changing an organisational learning culture, often created internal tensions that resulted in a mix of positive or negative messages filtering down through an organisation. Within organisation D, altering employee’s assumptions and therefore changing the organisational learning culture, has not been an easy task. Robert offered an opinion on how his organisation has struggled with changing the learning culture:

I think it does a lot depend on the personalities of everybody that is involved - Most of the senior management here are a lot more open and non-judgmental with it [the learning culture] than they were five years ago - There is that tension (Robert D6MSS).

This tension was a common thread that resonated with interviewees and suggested the beliefs and values of a leadership team influenced the beliefs and values of their employees. More specifically, Catherine summed up the view of many interviewees:

I think there is a bit of a disconnect with the more senior management roles in some training courses because there’s that lack of attending from their behalf... I think the lack of attendance at some training by senior staff members takes away the relevance, or the importance, of what a training session might be... What I see is when senior staff members aren’t present or they
leave half way through there is a change in the behaviour of other groups - You see people start to tune out... I believe there is a correlation between the lack of senior attendance and the importance that this communicates onto more junior staff members 'This person is not here so I won't' (Catherine B6MSS).

In addition to the senior leadership teams’ beliefs and values that influenced their employees when attempting to change the organisational learning culture, organisations needed to consider the leadership teams’ actions that provided guidance for change.

Interviewees reported that driving organisational change toward improving a learning culture required the interpretation of beliefs, values and actions of the leadership team and was an influence on an employee's level of commitment to attend learning initiatives. Bronwyn offered that the ongoing commitment of her leadership team influenced her decision to attend training:

They [the leadership team] really do have an emphasis in this organisation about training and it's very important and obviously we've always got work deliverables on but that's not a reason to avoid training and it's really important to make the time to go to those sessions (Bronwyn B7MSS).

This suggested the opposite also occurs. It is Damon’s view that without a positive learning culture or strong direction from the organisation, a lack of commitment to attend training resulted:

Our biggest problem is commitment from people... I think that's where we get a bit of a problem with the guys not turning up for training and not being committed to training 'I already know all that. I already learnt all that' - None of us are perfect... The next step is always good to learn - Some people believe that they don’t need training, they believe that they know it all anyway, and don’t have the commitment (Damon D2MSS).

This commitment to change is able to manifest itself both prior to and post learning. Interviewees remarked that change may have occurred during a training event however Deb commented that learnt behaviours were not maintained once back in the workplace:
I think it's very much getting it through to the executives that things need to change - I also think some people have really taken it [training] and run with it really well and I think other people have just fallen back into their old ways... These guys are going 'Well why should I change? - I think it's more the long tenure that they've been in the office and they've got the old culture so embedded (Deb D5LD).

Manager Amy suggested that a lack of support or at least a lack of understanding of the current organisational learning culture by the senior leadership team was a factor influencing learning transfer:

I don't know exactly how in touch the senior executives are with what is going on at ground zero (Amy A5MSS).

This view was further supported by Megan and Deb and added comments of frustration with their organisation’s current processes for learning transfer and concern about the perceived value and application of training:

There was some criticism of 'Yeah, we’re getting trained in all of this stuff but we don’t feel like it’s supported and where is someone from the leadership team?' More broadly, when I observed the rest of the organisation I think it's [lack of support for training] been a barrier (Megan C4MSS).

We could see the background behind it [the training] that it could be useful, but they're [the organisation] not going to be willing to put it into practice and nothing happened with it. They [senior executives] had done it [the training] a year ago and we didn’t see any of the actual processes or anything change (Deb D5LD).

Whilst the majority of interviewees expressed these views, Jean and other interviewees described their experiences with the senior management team in addressing learning culture change as being managed with a high degree of support:

So it [support for training] comes from a variety of areas but everything is always backed by senior management and they really encourage people to see if there is a need that’s not being met and is there something they can do about it (Jean B2LD).
This provided support for MV1 with findings that proposed organisational seniority influenced the commitment to training both positively and negatively within the organisational learning culture. The outcome of positive leadership influences and organisational support for learning were described by Steiner (1998) as management’s efforts to create a supportive learning organisation were efforts to establish a corporate learning ideology. Resistance to organisational change included the lack of learning support and was described by Sydow, Schreyogg et al. (2005) as the habitual routine actions that shaped future organisational decision-making processes and eventually created barriers that inhibited organisational inertia.

The eighth factor of Goold’s (2006) ten barriers to learning transfer postulated values and processes that were not practiced in the workplace led to distrust. These practices placed importance on perhaps what is more commonly termed ‘walking the talk’ as an influential factor over learning transfer within an organisational environment.

4.2.1.3 Influence of a competitive work environment

On an individual level, Steve noted that internal competitiveness was seen in his organisation as a limiting factor to personal and professional development. A competitive workplace environment was viewed by many as causing a reluctance of individuals to request assistance through further training. Interviewees expressed that training requests were perceived as highlighting their weaknesses and preferred not to add these requests to performance goals within their performance review discussions:

In the main it [training] is very task specific, you couldn’t build your career around it, and you certainly couldn’t improve around it… I think if you were to be honest, you would be a bold guy to say ‘Look, I need help here with my interaction with another department, I’m doing something wrong and need help (Steve ESMSS).

This organisational culture of a competitive working environment was further expressed by Damon as a barrier limiting positive progress improvements in his organisations learning culture, as did several interviewees:
The business team leaders and the managers do identify when training needs to happen, but you still need to get the individual to make sure that they can see it in themselves that they have a training need - People are reluctant to openly tell us that they have a training need because they think that it might be a reflection on their capacity or performance... If people aren’t going to put their goals in then it makes it really hard to develop a training program (Damon D2MSS).

A culture that included a competitive working environment mediated an individual’s desire to request personal and professional development precluding any transfer of their learning and therefore provided support for MV1. An organisational culture that emphasized individual competition may pose a barrier to learning, whereas cooperative team perceptions helped create trust and was a necessary condition for knowledge management (Wang & Noe 2010).

4.2.1.4 Perceptions of training value
Human resource practitioners, organisational development consultants, training managers and senior managers realised that any training and development activities was able to eventually show a positive return and an improved the bottom line (Bernthal 2003). Elliot commented on the ROI of training for his organisation and stated training was only be of value if it was aligned to operational requirements and strategic objectives:

With all the training that we’ve done there needs to be some sort of return on investment obviously so it’s all about being able to implement some sort of change within the organisation and it’s got to be aligned to our strategic objectives - So all the training interventions that we have are based around operational requirements and strategic alignment.’ And, ‘In terms of application the training projects are something that is going to be a cost saver for the business and we are going to apply that immediately... It’s translating into a real saving for the business (Elliot E4LD).

Once these organisational strategic objectives have been clearly addressed, the measure of training success became apparent. The view from Peter’s organisation suggested when training positively affected the bottom line management support for training increased:
From a positive point of view I know that I rolled out some merchandising training and personally the COO had noticed that there had been a revenue change in the business so was very keen to make sure that it kept rolling out... I think if there is a return on the investment its [training] well supported (Peter A3LD).

Megan expressed a view that not all training interventions created such a clear measure of training success or a direct monetary value to the organisation. Soft skills interventions such as leadership training for example created an indirect value for the organisation:

"It [training] certainly has helped to develop our leadership and there are lots of other benefits like working across silos with people from different departments... By investing in leaders then it ensures that there are other people that are ready to step up when needed and also in a better position to lead the organisation through change to get to where we need to go (Megan C4MSS)."

From an individual learner’s perspective, many interviewees suggested that training increased their personal and professional capabilities, their standing in the organisation as a knowledge leader and their value or measure of worth to the organisation. Again these qualities of increased but indirect value to the organisation may not be measureable to the bottom line however improved their values, beliefs and attitudes toward training and their organisation. Catherine, Matthew and Cate remarked on how training increased their perceptions of the personal value of training:

"It [training] makes me more capable in my role... That confidence then allows me to take on more work and by essentially thinking about things in a different way it brings them [the organisation] more money... I can better create a relationship with clients as well as identify opportunities to gain more revenue (Catherine B6MSS)."

"From my experience the only time that I would see it [the value of training] is when I have the opportunity to present a project or to work in a project team that is outside some of the training that I've received and been able to deliver aspects or learning from that training... I've learnt certain things from it [training] and extracted the things that I wanted to learn from it and have applied it, so clearly I can demonstrate that (Matthew E3MSS)."
In thinking about that, it [training] makes me feel more valued and if I'm more valued I'm happy to be there and if I'm happy to be there you get a better worker (Cate C1MSS).

Steve suggested that training was not always about a measurable value to organisation or about improved individual performance capabilities but offered a third value of training for consideration:

It's important that we run the company profitably but there is a customer at the end of nearly every action... I think through training we were able to identify the customer - There was a bit of confusion before - We needed to remind the business that the customer is the person who drives our product (Steve E5MSS).

These comments suggested that in attempting to identify the value of training, organisations needed to consider several avenues: firstly, the direct bottom line value; secondly, the benefits from up-skilling staff; and thirdly, the impact of training on their customers. The main goal of training was to provide, obtain and improve skills in order to help organisations achieve their goals, which created competitive advantage by adding value to their key resource, their employees (Yusof 2012).

Interviewee comments highlighted the value of training to the organisation or individuals was achieved through positive learning transfer. Few organisations attempted to show a positive link between training and positive change and any attempt by organisations to assess the value of training needed to identify the level of learning transfer and workplace application that ensued following a training intervention (Bunch 2007). This added weight to the inclusion of MV1 – organisational environment as a factor moderating learning transfer.

4.2.1.5 Time constraints and work pressures
A study on influencing factors that mediated learning transfer identified two major workplace constraints that impeded the use of training were a lack of time and workload pressures (Clarke 2002). Interviewees supported this conclusion and viewed these two factors as influencing learning both pre-intervention and post-intervention. This supported the Broad and Newstrom (1992) claim, offered in Chapter 2, that barriers to learning transfer and to the application of workplace
learning occurred before, during and after a learning intervention. On an organizational level, all interviewees identified time constraints and work pressures as barriers prior to training and in transferring their learning into their workplace:

A barrier that we’ve got is limited time for training. When we do put training sessions on we need to make sure we get our biggest bang for buck for the small period of time that we have (Damon D2MSS).

They [management] would fully support us if we had wanted to fully implement say a two-day workshop plan or facilitation plan, absolutely go for it, but I guess reality is the time pressure and everything else you’re trying to juggle (Sandra B5GE).

They [management] would see it as essential but also as a disruption, especially in busy weeks when they just don’t have time to send people to training… I do think they [management] would see it as essential but probably more as a disruption… To have us out of an office for a day or two days, it’s time we don’t get back… We fill in time sheets and we have tasks that need to be done and if everyone is at that training it’s very hard to get those things done (Max B4MSS).

They [staff] have their peak times but they don’t have their troughs anymore (Deb D5LD).

On an individual level, the issues of time constraints and work pressures leading up to training were expressed with general frustration. Amy, Jean, Susan and Max commented on their views and experiences in balancing workload with time for training:

Sometimes it’s [training] actually viewed negatively because we are so busy and with those time pressures people kind of roll their eye a little bit about training (Amy A5MSS).

I haven’t got enough time to do it [training]… It’s a juggling act between what projects we have on at the time and the ability to take that time out - It’s not because of not wanting to do it, we’re a project based business and it’s the nature of the game… It can be quite tough to sometimes take the time out (Jean B2LD).
I think it’s just a matter of balancing everyday activities - It’s just balancing and multi-tasking, but managing the normal workload is a little difficult for some people (Susan E7MSS).

It’s [training] determined by what’s in my calendar and the time - If I think it’s something that is really essential then I’ll move things around but otherwise its ‘No, I can’t go [to training] - I’m too busy (Max B4MSS).

It was the view of all interviewees that managing their time and work created anxiety that led to questions of training value versus the importance and urgency of their current workload.

Deb commented that the post training time constraints of management provided some reason for a potential lack of post learning support, mentoring or follow up (this issue has been outlined further in chapter 5):

I found some of the senior executives, once they get into a busy period they get very sharp and don’t want to spend time with you because you are not at their level so they start pulling the rank and it becomes a lot harder to get them around to your side and why they should be listening to you. Sometimes you find yourself trying to go through other avenues to get your work done because one person is trying to pull their rank (Deb D5LD).

All but three interviewees expressed a view that follow up from their manager and or the learning and development department would have assisted in the transfer and application of their learning and that the lack of follow up reduced training effectiveness. This suggested individuals, managers and the organisation would have benefited from a process of post learning follow up. Discussed in chapter 5 are findings that indicated the accountability of an employee’s stakeholders, for example their manager, the organisation or the organisations learning and development professionals was low and these stakeholders rarely assisted in the implementation of an employee’s new learning.

Nerida acknowledged her time constraints and work pressures, however provided a more positive view and an alternative to non-attendance or poor transfer and application of her training:
The fact that we have quite tight timelines and we have a lot of work to do means that you are forced to actually take those skills and apply them. I suppose the fact that we are busy and everyone has things to do actually does benefit you in actually having to apply them and think about what you are doing (Nerida B3GE).

Interviewees expressed frustration in balancing the need for training with the day-to-day organisational demands of the workplace. For example, attending training and transferring their learning from training created a disruption to the normal workflow. Clarke (2002) found overwhelmingly that both heavy workloads and time pressures to get tasks done were cited as key factors in worker’s decisions to utilise training gained on the job.

Goold’s (2006) first barrier to learning transfer indicated that urgent tasks take precedence over the time needed for reflection and Goold’s tenth barrier, the promotion of organisational learning may be seen as an interruption to the workflow rather than central to the organisations vision, mission and strategy. Anxiety occurred resulting from promoting learning to senior management who are sceptical of the learning alignment and longer-term benefits of training (Goold 2006). MV1 supported both Goolds’ and Clarkes’ findings that suggested organisational environment barriers mediated the learning transfer process.

4.2.2 Communication of individual and professional needs

An organisation’s culture and work environment provided influence over employees and when management encouraged open communication it enhanced mutual understanding and enabled improvements in individual performance and organisational effectiveness (Northup 2006). Interviewees commented on their experiences of how their organisations have addressed the learning and development conversation process:

Communication really doesn’t happen, it’s really not the strong point in the office. We have developed a matrix of what with all the different courses they [staff] should attend - But you should be having those conversations with your manager of ‘Is that [training] relevant to you? Is it the right time of year for you? What are you going to get out of it? Once you come out of that training are they actually going to use it straight away?’ .... They’re not having those conversations with the manager (Deb D5LD).
Tom offered, more regular discussions with managers both prior and post training focussing on communicating learning and development needs would have improved the outcome for both individuals and the organisation:

I think it’s all about having regular communications with your manager that are quite deliberate and focused - By focused I mean it should be referring back to an individual’s original goals and was it on the development plan. I think if you have more regular conversations throughout the year, specifically on learning and development rather than once a year, then you’ll get far better outcomes and results... I feel that communication and more of a commitment to coaching staff would be of benefit, which means regular communication throughout the year around matching the job training and where the person wants to go (Tom D3MSS).

Interviewee’s commented on who was responsible for an apparent lack of communication, however there were differences in interviewee experiences and views on the best way to move forward. Tom suggested that it was less about the need for a formal process rather developing the manager – direct report relationship that created an environment for improved communications in perhaps a less formal environment:

People are not very articulate or precise about exactly what their development needs are... Sometimes you run into a risk in a large organisation like ours when you have a plan for learning and development where someone assumes someone else is going to give them their training needs... They [individuals] need to be a lot better around articulating what their development need is so there’s actually a higher likelihood that will be met... They [managers] are always busy people so it’s hard to get hold of them all the time and have that regular chat, but for my mind informal discussions are usually a lot of our communications - It’s not so much about formal discussions here (Tom D3MSS).

Whereas Matthew recommended a more formal communication process as a method of improving communication between managers and peers within his organisation:

We need to have the framework in place to be able to have some honest discussions and at the moment I feel as though there’s not a framework in place to have that (Matthew E3MSS).
Communication played a vital role in the success of any organisation and in shaping the nature and quality of subordinate practices (Northup 2006). Difficulties in communicating learning needs were identified by interviewees, which suggested a barrier to learning transfer. This occurred prior to a learning intervention where individuals did not clearly articulate their learning needs or that the organisation failed to recognise areas for personal and professional development. Comments suggested difficulties also arose post learning due to time constraints or the lack of any formal follow up process. The concept that communication issues spanned the entire process of learning and development was concerning, however findings suggested that by improving communication individual’s performance and organisational effectiveness would increase.

4.2.3 Organisational processes for learning as formal and informal rules

Effective learning design resulted when learning was presented, built on and confirmed in small amounts and was therefore reinforced (Skinner 1954). Bruner (1960) supported Skinners view and suggested it was the role of structure in learning rather than simply the mastery of facts and techniques that was at the centre of the classic problem of the application of learning. The building of learning processes and structures introspectively affected a learner’s ability to construct, build on and transform learning into application and was a design for learning (Conway 1997).

An organisation’s management was often not fully aware of the type of knowledge and competencies needed to run its organisational processes properly (Pircher, Zenk & Risku 2008). As a result Pircher, Zenk and Risku suggested organisational processes were frequently decided without awareness of the impact of the gaps in competencies that might subsequently be opened. Organisation must influence and support knowledge management capabilities that deployed and integrated available methods, instruments and technologies, which provided a beneficial environment for the use and creation of knowledge (Pircher, Zenk & Risku 2008).

Training was not coaxing or persuading people to do what was wanted but rather a process which created organisational conditions that would cause personnel to
strive for better performance (Olaniyan & Ojo 2008). These organisational conditions were the rules by which training and development functions were guided. Organisational rules could be used to identify training needs that were aligned to individual, corporate and strategic objectives and the design, development, delivery, evaluation and value of a training intervention.

Interviewees from organisation D (a Government department – based in Sydney) indicated that they have a strong process for individual and organisational needs analysis, as discussed below, and utilised an effective system for training process and development:

It [training] that gets mapped out at the start of the year - it's an annual process - and we'd be trying to map out whether the delivery of training and development is going to be by [training] courses or through other sorts of experiences etc… There is a defined program which we agree upon at the start of the year (Tom D3MSS).

We have a learning management system that has all of our courses planned out for the year… We have every single course that's available for our guys… There are external courses that if they find and wish to go to they can also get approval and we'll send them on different course if they can prove it's useful for their role - But most of it is internal stuff - any technical training is definitely there because it's compulsory (Deb D5LD).

Organisation D’s system for training process and development was not shared by the majority of interviewees in the other four research organisations. Amy, Max, Nerida and Jean expressed frustration with the administration of their training processes and shared their beliefs and experiences:

I don’t actually think that we have a strong enough set of training processes developed (Amy A5MSS).

They do tend to have a training schedule but you still don’t tend to really know what is coming up when. You just seem to get emails of ‘This training is on… (Max B4MSS).

It’s almost like we need an internal system that is a bit of a reminder ‘Don’t forget next week is going to be really busy (Nerida B2GE).
I just think it's around the organisation of the training. In our performance development framework we have everyone's KPIs set and then linked to their KPIs is a development plan, so we can actually see what people need to do... I could be involved more to make it run smoother from the admin perspective, but in terms of the content I think it's fabulous - really find a lot of value in that (Jean B2LD).

Kirsten identified the progress her organisation had made in introducing their training process, however suggested support for a training process hinged on the level of organisational assistance individuals received and the relationship they had with their managers:

I guess our performance review process is the process that has finally identified an individual learning plan for staff members - That didn’t exist before... I think it’s a very clear process change... There is a very strong push in this organisation for learning and development but I still come back to a process is only as good as how it is implemented, and only as good as your manager’s view on training and development, and the relationship between a manager and their direct report... I think our processes are there now to actually support people’s journey but it still comes down to whether the manager supports learning and development (Kirsten C2MSS).

Kirsten suggested the informal processes for learning transfer and application were dependent upon the manager – direct report relationship and within her organisation, the informal processes were equally as important as the more formal practices.

Jessica, Max and James reported that from their individual perspectives the factors of personal feedback, informal learning sessions and reward for completion of training were methods that were able to be used for improving their organisations learning processes and were important elements for consideration when introducing processes for training:

The process involved 360-degree feedback, so my managers, my peers, and then others in the organisation were involved in that - I had some fairly accurate and honest feedback... It was really good
for me; it was actually something that I see as a launching pad for my development (Jessica C3LD).

We have things called ‘Lunch and Learn’ where people will give case studies of things they’ve done and things they’ve learnt and you get quite a lot of people going along to those (Max B4MSS).

We don’t get them now but we used to get certificates and although they weren’t of use outside the organisation they were useful within... You could go for another job within the company and you’d have these, which would give you more leverage than someone who didn’t have that (James A1GE).

One of the five intrinsic and extrinsic factors Caffarella (2001) offered in Chapter 2, recommended the successful facilitation of learning transfer within organisations relied on how and under what organisational influences was the learning structured. MV1 findings concur with Caffarella and suggested when implementing an organisational process or rules for learning and development one should consider factors of organisational strategy, the influence of the organisation and management and the learning transfer and application processes for employees.

4.2.4 Learning alignment to organisational and individual needs
Discussed below are further factors influential in moderating learning transfer. These factors were drawn from interviewee comments about the organisational processes for aligning training to individual and organisational needs or pre-intervention needs analysis and the post-intervention review and evaluation process.

Learning alignment needed to ensure the ‘fit’, ‘linkage’ or ‘integration’ of strategy and action and be focused on the need to contribute to competitive advantage (CIPD 2007). Many organisations acknowledged the strategic importance of human capital development, for example, learning, improving the skills, developing the experience of organisation’s employees and recognised that human capital and people development were important parts of organisational strategy and performance priorities (CIPD 2007). In organisation D, all six interviewees reported having this defined approach to human capital development. Tom and Damon reflected on the structured approach used in their organisation:
They [Learning & Development] go through everyone’s learning and development needs and would consider what the staff feels their development needs are. It is quite structured, so if we saw some particular gaps then we would try to develop them in that way - There is flexibility within the program if people have specific needs identified in their learning and development plan and we will just go outside [use external trainers] for that (Tom D3MSS).

We sat down and tried to identify our strengths and our weaknesses with regards to learning opportunities and developed what we call a learning program - If there were areas you believe you need more training in, we’d try to develop those opportunities and identify them whilst on the job (Damon D2MSS).

Organisation D’s approach was viewed as a positive step, however the balance of the interviewees from other organisations expressed confusion about how their learning needs were being addressed and supported by their organisation. Max, Matthew and Megan commented asking, for example, why did I need to attend training, and why have I been selected to attend that training?

You go ‘Do I need it/Don’t I need it’? I think I might need it’ and sometimes you go like ‘No, I didn’t really need that’… I don’t think they plan it [training] necessarily well, in that we might have too much training in one week and do training at times that isn’t always good timing for everybody... But I guess it’s the best we’re gonna get... We did a bit of training on Office 2007 and a month or so later I was moved to Office 2010 so a lot of what I had learnt was irrelevant. That was a bit of a barrier to using what I had learnt because it was irrelevant (Max B4MSS).

It [training needs] probably needs to be more tailored and more specific to each individual... I think there needs to be more of a gap analysis done in terms of what are the skill sets required for particular roles and where are the shortcomings - There needs to be more individual analysis and some more individual attention to specifics for each person (Matthew E3MSS).

At the moment, the identified need should really come through the performance review and development process which is a defined process that should happen twice a year at different times of the year, but it doesn’t. The take up or participation rate here is still too low for that to have any broad application (Megan C4MSS).
These were common opinions offered by interviewees that highlighted employee frustration with the lack of a pre-intervention needs analysis process. Two interviewees Bronwyn and Nerida offered suggested practices designed to improve or align their pre-intervention needs analysis process:

It’s about working out who is right for which training session and not necessarily having everyone do everything (Bronwyn B7MSS).

I think it [training] should be linked that back to your KPIs - For example, if I have areas of expertise and I want to build on those certain technique then I can go to those training, but if I actually already know that quite well and the training is going to be quite base level then that’s no use to me attending that training... I think that's where it [training needs analysis] misses the boat (Nerida B3GE).

The importance of a needs analysis process expressed above suggested that by altering the beliefs and perceptions about the value of training by individuals and by their organisation led to improved transfer and application of learning and was a strategy for competitive advantage. With the exception of one research organisation, MV1 reported the ‘fit’, ‘linkage’ or ‘integration’ (CIPD 2007) of any strategy or organisational actions that did not focus on linking the training needs of the individual with corporate objectives created a barrier to learning transfer.

4.2.5 Review and evaluation process

The present challenge and goal for managers was to provide a means to tie training results to organizational goals (Miller 2002). In the current competitive business environment providing a means of showing the relationship between processes for learning, training results and organizational goals has become important to the future of the training profession (Miller 2002). Organisation D was reported consistently ahead in the areas of processes for learning when compared with the other four organisations and training review and evaluation was no exception. Damon and Robert explained how the review process was managed in their organisation:

We do a quality review on work... From the results of those particular reviews we look for commonality of issues that provide us areas where we need training (Damon D2MSS).
There are some very busy periods, but there are other times when we can take stock of where we’re at and what the plans should be for next year and how well we are working - how well has the training program worked? And, are we delivering on it?... That will be something that then cascades down to other people to say ‘Well we’ve had this training this year. What’s worked and what’s not? Why hasn’t it worked?’ (Robert D6MSS).

Whilst training reviews were handled at an organisational level, this was where the positive organisational processes for learning concluded at organisation D and reverted to the standard of the other four organisations.

Training evaluation across all five organisations was described as non-existent with the exception of a general use of smile sheets [course evaluation forms] directly following training. MV1 findings supported a research study into the value of evaluations and making training evaluations more effective, which reported 91.6 percent of organisations suggested they evaluated at least some of their training programs at the simplest level, Kirkpatrick level 1 [smile sheets or the reactions of participants to the course] (Ketter 2010). Manager Andrew provided his perspective on the practical application of learning evaluation and the potential organisational benefits:

I would probably like to see some type of evaluation of staff by the organisation or that group to get a base line of how well the training has been accepted, how it’s been implemented and what the results are... I think it would be a good barometer for them to have some type of evaluation of staff training just to get a good blueprint or snapshot as to how it’s happening, do they need to revise a little bit, make it a bit more interesting for people to say ‘Listen, I want to go to training’ not just ‘You’re going to training’ (Andrew A2MSS).

Evaluation has fallen short of demonstrating the link between training outcomes and organisational effectiveness (Miller 2002). Findings from MV1 reported none of the thirty-one interviewees expressed a view of their organisations internal processes or practices included a method of measuring or assessing learning transfer or the workplace application of learning.
In all but one organisation (organisation D) the application of any defined learning processes was in their infancy or non-existent. This suggested that for individuals, an organisational environment that precluded processes for learning (the rules) hindered the task of transferring their learning into the workplace prior to any learning taking place.

The analysis of data on the organisational environment (MV1) highlighted both positive and negative environmental approaches and processes that organisations use to address learning transfer and the application of workplace learning. The themes arising from this MV1 analysis are now discussed.

4.3 Organisational environment - MV1 Summary of Results

4.3.1 Introduction

An organisation’s culture and work environment provided influence over employees and when management encouraged open communication it enhanced mutual understanding that enabled improvements in individual performance and organisational effectiveness (Northup 2006). MV1 results aligned with the organisational environment literature. MV1 therefore supported Reid’s (1987) and Baldwin and Ford’s (1988) inclusion of organisational environment as a mediator of learning transfer, all four of Goold’s (2006) organisational environment barriers (detailed in Chapter 2, table 2.2) and Steiner’s (1998) first influential factor of learning transfer, organisational structure.

Reviewing the relationships between training intent, objectives and organisational impact measures provided steps toward understanding the importance of learning processes in meeting strategic organisational objectives (Miller 2002). Exploring organisational environment measures of learning culture, the alignment, value and processes for learning (MV1) that affected learning practices within organisations have highlighted several themes for discussion.

The findings however raised further organisational environment issues that mediated learning transfer and provided implications for further research as discussed in Chapter 7.
Emergent themes identified factors of organisational learning culture, for example, seniority, competitive work environment, time constraints and work pressures and internal communication practices, together with perceptions of training value and the effectiveness of organisational learning processes and are discussed below.

These factors are viewed as barriers to learning transfer within the organisational environment and therefore should be considered when exploring issues of learning transfer within organisations. The results from the analysis of MV1 data above on organisational learning culture are now discussed.

4.3.2 Organisational learning culture

The culture and history of the institution provided influence over a learner’s motivational and behavioural objectives (Reid 1987) and the expectations of the organisation on the learner’s level of ability and motivation further influenced learning procedures and learning objectives (Biggs 2003). The organisational environment included working within rules (both formal and informal), moral and corporate codes of conduct and within regulations (Burke & Hutchins 2007). These organisational expectations have continued to influence organisational culture (Burke & Hutchins 2007).

Findings suggested transforming learning into application had a strong relationship with the structure, nature and extrinsic influence of the organisational learning culture. Several themes emerged from the analysis of data on organisational learning culture.

4.3.2.1 Hierarchy and seniority

Hierarchy and seniority were reported by interviewees as influential factors on organisational learning culture. Findings proposed that organisational seniority influenced an employee’s commitment to training both positively and negatively. The outcome of positive leadership influenced the organisational support for learning (Steiner 1998). Managements’ efforts that created a supportive learning organisation were described by Steiner (1998) as efforts to establish a corporate learning ideology.

CEO and senior management team’s influence was expressed by interviewee’s as influencing training inertia, attitudes toward the commitment to training, the
quality of learning design and the alignment of learning to strategic goals. Anxiety occurred resulting from promoting learning to senior management who are sceptical of the learning alignment and longer-term benefits (Goold 2006). The majority of interviewees conveyed this anxiety and viewed senior management influence over training was high, however stated that senior management failed to provide adequate post learning influence and support for learning transfer.

Organisational learning culture was described by Sydow, Schreyogg et al. (2005) as habitual routine actions that shaped future organisational decision-making processes and eventually created barriers that inhibited organisational inertia. Findings supported this description of actions through the expressed senior management’s resistance to providing organisational learning support and therefore created a barrier to changing the learning culture within organisations.

4.3.2.2 Competitive work environment
An organisational culture that emphasized individual competition posed a barrier to learning whereas cooperative team perceptions created trust and was a necessary condition for knowledge management (Wang & Noe 2010). Findings suggested internal competitiveness created an environment where individuals were reluctant to highlight issues of personal and professional development, afraid it would be seen by others as a weakness in their abilities or skills. Management interviewees reported this reluctance as creating a barrier that limited positive progress improvements within an organisational learning culture.

These findings suggested an organisational learning culture that included a competitive working environment mediated an individual’s desire to express training needs and requests for personal and professional development. A competitive working environment therefore precluded any personal knowledge or skill development, any potential benefits training would have provided and inhibited organisational progress.

4.3.2.3 Time constraints and work pressures
Heavy workloads and time pressures to get tasks done were cited as key factors in worker’s decisions to utilise training gained on the job (Clarke 2002). Interviewees cited frustration in balancing the need for training with the day-to-
day organisational demands of the workplace. For example, attending training and transferring their learning from training created a disruption to their normal workflow.

The promotion of organisational learning was an interruption to the workflow rather than central to the organisations vision, mission and strategy (Goold 2006). All interviewees identified that time constraints and work pressures were barriers both prior to training and in transferring their learning into their workplace and therefore MV1 findings agreed with Goold’s assessment.

Organisations researched viewed training was an essential part of business however, time constraints and work pressures were held responsible for poor attitudes toward training and the support for training initiatives by all levels of management. These poor attitudes were given as the most common reason for a manager’s lack of support and follow-up for training. This study’s findings identified L&D professionals’ beliefs that their training schedules, workplace time pressures and a general lack of interest from senior management inhibited any formal follow up process including any measurement of training success or value.

It was the view of all interviewees that managing their time and workload created anxiety, leading them to ask questions of training value versus the importance and urgency of their current workload, was concerning. Urgent tasks may take precedence over the time needed for training reflection (Goold 2006). MV1 therefore supported both Goold’s and Clarke’s findings that time constraints and work pressures were barriers that mediated the learning transfer process.

4.3.2.4 Internal communication
Communication played a vital role in the success of any organisation, which shaped the nature and quality of subordinate practices (Northup 2006). Results from MV1 found the concept of individual – manager communication spanned the entire end-to-end process of organisational learning and development and influenced pre and post learning discussions, organisational support for learning and manager follow-up.

This study’s findings reported differences in opinion on who was responsible for this lack of communication, however interviewees suggested a more formal
process as a method of improving communication between managers, employee's and peers was warranted. These finding suggested by improving internal communication processes, individual performance and organisational effectiveness increased.

The ability of organisational culture to influence an individual or organisation’s approach to learning transfer has been demonstrated. Issues of hierarchy and seniority, a competitive work environment, time constraints and work pressures and the effectiveness of internal communications were found to be influential extrinsic environmental factors that mediated the transfer of learning within organisations.

From the analysis of data on MV1, the further organisational environment factors of learning alignment, the perceptions of learning value and the internal processes for learning that were identified in the literature as influencing learning transfer are now outlined.

4.3.3 Alignment, value and processes for learning

4.3.3.1 Alignment of training to both individual and organisational needs
Learning alignment needed to ensure the ‘fit’, ‘linkage’ or ‘integration’ of strategy and action that focused on the need to contribute to competitive organisational advantage (CIPD 2007). MV1 reported regular discussions with managers both prior and post training that focussed on communicating learning and development needs, improved the outcome for both employee’s and the organisation. Interviewees expressed confusion about how their learning needs were being addressed and supported by their organisation and reported frustration with the lack of a pre-intervention needs analysis process. Findings further suggested this occurred prior to a learning intervention where individuals did not clearly articulate their learning needs or that the organisation failed to recognise areas for personal and professional development.

The importance of a needs analysis process expressed above suggested that by improving the beliefs and perceptions of individuals and the organisation about the value of training promoted a strategy for competitive advantage. This study concurred with the need for ‘fit’, ‘linkage’ or ‘integration’ (CIPD 2007) of any
learning to the strategic direction of the organisation. Results suggested any organisation that did not focus on linking the training needs of the individual, with job or task characteristics and that of the corporate objectives created a barrier to learning transfer.

4.3.3.2 Perceptions of training value

Findings indicated all five organisations supported training pre-intervention, however only one out of the five organisations researched attempted limited identification of the value of their training efforts to the organisation or to individual employees. Any attempt by organisations to assess the value of training needed to identify the level of learning transfer and workplace application that ensued following a training intervention (Bunch 2007).

The main goal of training was to provide and obtain improved skills in order to help organisations achieve their goals and to create competitive advantage by adding value to their key resource, their employees (Yusof 2012). In attempting to explore views on the value of training, MV1 findings reported organisations needed to consider three things that influenced the perceptions of value; personal and operational considerations, the type of training conducted and the value of training to the customer:

- The direct bottom line value of training - training could only be of value if it was aligned to an individual’s personal development, role requirements, operational requirements and the strategic objectives of the organisation. Once clearly addressed the measure of training success are apparent

- The benefits from up-skilling staff created both direct and indirect value for the organisation. Hard skills training, for example technical or sales training, produced measurable outcomes however soft skills training such as leadership training may not produce such immediate and therefore measurable results

- The value of training to the customer - these are benefits reflected in service levels and customer satisfaction and offered a further example of indirect value to the organisation but perhaps more measurable.
Although evaluation has fallen short of demonstrating the link between training outcomes and organisational effectiveness (Miller 2002), MV1 findings reported three individual learner’s perceptions of training value: firstly, training increased an individual’s personal and professional capabilities; secondly, training improved their standing in the organisation as a knowledge leader; thirdly, training heightened their value or measure of worth to the organisation. These examples improved an individual’s values, beliefs and attitudes toward their organisation and therefore provided indirect value that may not indicate measureable results to the bottom line.

Organisations that attempted to show a positive link between training and positive change was increasing learning value (Bunch 2007). Findings reported that none of the thirty-one interviewees expressed a view of their organisations internal processes or practices included a method of measuring or assessing learning transfer or workplace application of learning. The majority of organisations would not know if new knowledge from the learning intervention was actually applied in the workplace or of what value the behaviour change has benefited the organisation (Conner 2002). Findings supported Conner’s comment and offered organisations relied on anecdotal evidence that learning transfer or workplace application of learning had actually occurred. All organisations researched reported difficulty in isolating training value due in part to the lack of training processes. From the analysis of data, results as to the effectiveness of these organisational learning processes are offered.

4.3.3.3 Organisational processes for learning
Organisational training was not coaxing or persuading people to do what was wanted but rather a process of creating organisational conditions that are able to cause personnel to strive for better performance (Olaniyan & Ojo 2008). These organisational conditions are the rules which training and development functions were guided by. These conditions or organisational rules were used to identify training needs that were aligned to individual and corporate strategies and the design, development, delivery, evaluation and value of a training intervention.
Reviewing the relationships between training intent, objectives and organisational impact measures provided steps toward understanding the importance of learning processes that met strategic organisational objectives (Miller 2002). MV1 findings suggested support for a training process hinged on the level of organisational assistance individuals received and the relationship they have with their internal managers. Findings reported informal processes for learning and informal manager – direct report relationships were equally as important as the more formal learning practices within organisations. The successful facilitation of learning transfer within organisations relied on how and under what organisational influences were the learning been structured (Caffarella 2001).

When implementing an organisational process [or rules] for learning and development, findings reported that one should consider factors of organisational strategy, the influence of the organisation and management and the learning transfer and application processes for employees. The further factors of personal feedback, informal learning sessions and reward for the completion of training were identified as methods that improved organisational learning processes and were important elements for consideration when introducing processes for training.

The building of learning processes and structures introspectively affected a learner's ability to construct, build on and transform learning into application and provided a design for learning (Conner 2002). In all but one organisation (organisation D) the application of any defined learning processes were in their infancy or non-existent. This suggested that for individuals an organisational environment that had limited processes for learning (the rules) influenced the task of effectively transferring their learning into the workplace prior to any learning taking place.

4.4 Conclusion
The findings offered support for the inclusion of the organisational environment (MV1) as a factor that mediated learning transfer. MV1 included factors of learning culture, perceptions of learning value and learning processes (rules) that were identified in the analysis of data as influencing the learning transfer process.
The findings therefore supported the inclusion of MV1 as an overarching learning transfer variable of this study’s research instrument and the first of the three moderating variables for investigating organisational learning transfer.

General findings from investigating the organisational environment (MV1) as a mediator of learning transfer, aligned with Reid’s (1987) term institutional constraints, Baldwin and Ford’s (1988) factor of the organisational environment and Steiner’s (1998) factor of organisational structure. The results provided further support for the identified four organisational environment learning transfer barriers included in Goold’s (2006) 10 barriers to learning transfer (outlined in Chapter 2, table 2.2).

MV1 findings emerged from the data and provided clarity for and extended the extant literature on learning transfer within organisations. These findings have been included as sub-headings within the fuller discussion of research results presented in Chapter 7:

- Influence of hierarchy and seniority
- Competitive work environment
- Time constraints and work pressures
- Internal communication practices and relationships
- Organisational and individual perceptions of training value
- Effectiveness of organisational learning processes and needs analysis.

MV1 findings suggested these intrinsic and extrinsic organisational environment factors influenced organisational learning transfer. This study suggested the additional factors be viewed as barriers to learning transfer and that these barriers be considered when exploring issues of learning transfer within organisations.

In the following analysis and results chapter Organisational Stakeholders (MV2), interviewees commented on stakeholder ownership of and accountability for learning, organisational, management and peer support pre and post learning, management follow up, coaching and mentoring and ongoing learning support as
factors that further mediated learning transfer. At the conclusion of Chapter 5 themes emerging are identified and the results from the analysis of data are summarised.
CHAPTER FIVE
Analysis and Results – Organisational Stakeholders (MV2)

5.1 Introduction

MV2 highlighted the influence organisational stakeholders had over an individual’s learning transfer. Many accounts of stakeholder activities focus on the attributes of organisations or the attributes of stakeholders rather than on the attributes of the relationship between organisational stakeholders and individuals (Frooman 1999; Greenwood 2001).

This study extended this view by identifying relationships, accountabilities and influence over individual learners (subject) and their managers or other organisational stakeholders (community) in attempting to transfer their new workplace learning (object). MV2 therefore explored these relationships, accountabilities and influences as depicted in the sub-activity triangle of the research instrument (see figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Adapted by Author from Engestrom (1987) Activity System Analytical Framework.
For any organisational endeavour the goal was to have stakeholder relationships that created sustainable high-performance organisations (Sloan 2007). Sloan posits organisations that included their stakeholders in the planning and decision-making processes were in a position to attain benefits from them. Stakeholder participation in organisational planning linked planning with development provided a mechanism for communication and increased stakeholder ownership, which enabled greater support for the project. (Danev 2010).

The theoretical platform that guided MV2 was Schlenker et al. (1994) accountability pyramid. In developing the accountability pyramid from their previous model the responsibility triangle Schlenker et al. brought into play a fourth element, the term audience (Schlenker et al. 1994). Schlenker et al. supported the work of Cummings and Anton (1990) and that of Tetlock (1992) and believed the element of audience provided guidance to assess an actor’s, or group of actors, degree of accountability.

In context to this study, the term audience suggested by Schlenker et al. (1994) was identified as the term organisational stakeholder. Support for the inclusion of Schlenker's accountability pyramid in addressing learning transfer issues came from Burke and Hutchins (2007) which recommended future transfer research grounded in established theory such as Schlenker's work would help researchers take a more multidimensional perspective of learning transfer.

One of the functions of the accountability process was to reach conclusions about the nature of the elements and linkages in cases which assessment or evaluation was warranted (Schlenker et al. 1994). Accountability models speculated evaluation by an individual or a group from an extrinsic audience perspective was possible (Cummings & Anton 1990; Schlenker et al. 1994; Tetlock 1992).

The accountability pyramid (Schlenker et al. 1994) as theoretical support for this study's second moderating variable (MV2). The term audience within the accountability pyramid included the identification of the roles and influence individuals or influential groups possessed (Schlenker et al. 1994). MV2 investigated the extent to which a learner had clarity of their roles and the
influence and accountability of stakeholders to mediate a learner's learning transfer.

The findings supported the inclusion of Schlenker et al. (1994) accountability pyramid construct, the term audience, by suggesting that the influence of stakeholders [the audience] mediated on-the-job performance and application of learning and therefore a learner’s ability to transfer their workplace learning.

This study explored the influence organisational stakeholders had over individual learners when attempting to transfer and apply their workplace learning. These influences within the scope of MV2 included stakeholder ownership of learning, support from and accountability of the organisation, L&D professionals, managers and peers and the coaching, mentoring, post learning follow-up and ongoing learning support provided by these stakeholders.

5.2 Organisational stakeholders – MV2 Analysis

A study on work environment factors that influenced training transfer found employees received minimal support from their supervisors to implement training (Clarke 2002). Clarke's results concluded that discussions with their supervisors tended to be about how useful trainees found the training rather than any explicit focus on supporting the transfer of skills and knowledge. The Clarke study supported literature presented in Chapter 2 (Baldwin & Ford 1988; Goold 2006; Steiner 1998) and suggested the actions of stakeholders supported or created barriers to learning transfer and therefore mediated learning transfer.

This study's investigation into the influence of organisational stakeholders provided interviewees with an opportunity to comment on their organisational audience. This clarity exposed and supported links between the needs of the learner and the learner's stakeholders (Schlenker et al. 1994). MV2 findings suggested enhanced clarity of stakeholders created accountability for and ownership of learning and promoted a positive learning transfer climate.

5.2.1 Accountability for and ownership of learning

Managers held employees accountable by building accountability actions into their daily schedule such as providing timely feedback and measuring progress toward
goals (Haneberg 2012). Ownership on the other hand, Haneburg (2012) suggested, was not something that managers were able to demand; it was intrinsic rather than extrinsic like accountability. Employees chose whether to own their work, their department’s goals and their organization’s mission:

“Managers need to create a work environment that improves the likelihood of high employee engagement and ownership. Employees choose to feel and display ownership. Managers can improve ownership by creating a workplace that is intrinsically motivating” (Haneberg 2012, p1).

Interviewees commented on their perceptions of stakeholder involvement. Megan expressed that internal stakeholder engagement practices were limited within her organisation and there were no accountabilities placed on her to attend, transfer or apply learning:

It [training] really needs their [the stakeholders] buy in and their ownership to actively encourage it [the training] and to use some of the common language that we were all exposed to in training... It’s [training] a huge investment for the organisation... For me, I would really like to see some of that support and some more dialogue about it from that [stakeholders] group - As a result [of low support] I think people might say ‘Well did anybody attend that change management course a year ago? Was it any good? Is it worth me signing up to this one? It’s a big investment of my time and I’m strapped for time - No one is going to hold me accountable anyway - No one is going to make sure I do anything with it so I just reckon I’ll leave it - No one’s asked me about it so... (Megan C4MSS).

This lack of accountability and stakeholder ownership speculated there may be links between the lack of organisational and managerial ownership of learning described by Megan and the findings of commitment to training and the perceptions of the value of training that emerged in Chapter 4 (MV1) and more generally, findings in the area of learner motivation in Chapter 6 (MV3). These moderating variable interrelationships are discussed in Chapter 7.

Nick suggested that to achieve organisational ownership and engagement of learning stakeholders, individuals needed to seek and include the senior management team’s advice and involvement:
They [the stakeholders] need to be very, very comfortable with it [the training]... They also need to be intrinsically involved in it...
Actually get the executive management to engage with it (Nick D4MSS).

Nick’s comment supported the involvement of the senior leadership team, which provided a higher level of learning ownership and therefore increased accountability for learning and learning transfer within organisations. This view was reinforced by a study into organisational stakeholder support which found top management support affected both the level and quality of knowledge sharing through influencing employee commitment to knowledge management within organisations (Lee, Kim & Kim 2006).

Tom noted that in his organisation [D] the level of CEO accountability had influenced the level and quality of training. Tom further commented that senior management support influenced his approach to learning:

I think he [the CEO] really drives it [training], it probably does have to come from the top of the organisation as they [the senior leadership team] deal directly with the people who are reporting to them and then it tends to flow down more by role modelling (Tom D3MSS).

Tom’s comment added weight to the recommendation; training that has top down support, ownership and accountability provided guidance for employees as to the importance and value of the training to the organisation (Mullen et al. 2006). This suggested the opposite also occurred where a lack of ownership and or accountability reduced perceptions of training value and therefore mediated learning transfer. Within organisation E, interviewees Matthew and Sam reported similar limited support during and post learning from senior management that influenced their transfer and application of their learning:

Getting any air time with the stakeholders was a challenge at times... Probably trying to get them to look at it [training] from a holistic point of view rather than looking at it from a departmental point of view was difficult as well - So trying to get them [stakeholders] to have a whole business approach at times was a challenge (Matthew E3MSS).
They [the organisation] were supportive in allowing us the time to complete the training... The main problems for me was that there were senior people in the organisation that provided their own roadblocks along the way when we needed support from them. There were sceptics who were not probably as helpful as you would expect (Sam E2GE).

This suggested the influence of stakeholder accountability and ownership of learning from all levels of management were factors that enabled or limited learning transfer. Interviewees highlighted the influence of senior management as important leading up to training, when attending training and when attempting to apply new workplace learning. This supported Baldwin and Ford's (1988) suggestion that employees who perceived how important their training programs were to their supervisors remained more motivated to attend, learn and transfer their new skills to the job.

5.2.2 Learning and development support and accountability

Accountability for training at an organisational level was quickly becoming a requirement for the training professional (Chapman 2000). Requests from management were now turning the focus toward showing changes beyond the learner to the organisation (Miller 2002). A study into the perceptions of training and non-training manager's accountability found non-training managers identified business objectives in significantly more programs than did training managers (Miller 2002). Miller further commented the agreement on intent and actual organisational impact between the two managers demonstrated a unity of direction toward accountability. Cate’s comment below suggested how her organisation (C) exhibited this management unity:

By giving people the skills, personal development skills or management skills, I believe we’re seeing a little bit of a lift in performance management with managers having more tools in their toolbox - They may not have applied them yet and they may need support to, but they are thinking with some different options that weren’t there before (Cate C1MSS).

The majority of interviewees however suggested no such unity in their organisations’ practices or for accountability from their learning and development
managers. Andrew summed up comments relating to the support received from his organisations learning and development department:

Not a lot, no... It [training support] was only verbal, or it could have been a small email just outlining some of the issues that were to be covered, and just to be prepared to make sure you are there on that date (Andrew A2MSS).

A connection between the lack of processes for training identified in the findings of MV1 and the lack of learning and development accountability discussed above emerged. This provided some clarity into the difficulties individuals experienced in transferring their organisational learning and how the influence of learning and development stakeholders mediated learning transfer.

These comments suggested little has changed since Miller's findings, which indicated the shift toward learning and development accountability had presented a challenge for training professional to use the organisation as the unit of analysis in producing evidence of training impact (Miller 2002).

5.2.3 Manager's support and accountability
Managers and supervisors played a critical role as learning transfer agents when they used their managerial skills and abilities to support or influence employee learning transfer (Bates 2003). Managers and supervisors helped generate the outcomes for which training was intended and therefore enhanced the return on training investment for the organisation (Bates 2003). Interviewee comments aligned with research that indicated trainees returning to a supportive work environment were more motivated and more likely to apply their new skills to the work setting (Egan, Yang & Bartlett 2004; Holton, Bates & Ruona 2000).

The issue of a lack of organisational support was highlighted by interviewees and supported Newstrom (1986) who criticised organisations over the lack of strong philosophical support for the goals of training and development programs that was typical in many organisations. Matthew, Nerida, Megan and Tom remarked on their manager's accountability and the lack of support their managers provided:

I think it's a manager's responsibility to ensure that their staff have the relevant skill set to be able to carry out their particular
I think perhaps the barriers of lack of follow up or lack of support of the training, they [managers] might be sceptical about the value of some of the training but recognise the value of staff needing to be trained and developed in general... There is a requirement [to attend training] but there’s no accountability (Megan C4MSS).

I see manager accountability as a challenge for us... We need to make it a far more fundamental to a person’s role to develop the person underneath them and to take a little more ownership around it, not just sending them off to a training course but more having that discussion with them about why they are going on that training course, what you hope to get out of that training course and how to apply it when you get back - I don’t think that’s a thing that you can really legislate from the top echelon to make it happen; it’s more about changing the culture of the individuals [managers] themselves to ‘Yeah, that's really important.’ - We are dependent upon our people in our business and a lot of it is around that knowledge sharing collaboration and it's for the individual supervisors directly to take on that role... I just feel that we are mixed in where our people are at (Tom D3MSS).

The interviewee perceptions above suggested there was value in managers taking ownership and accountability for their direct report’s learning. Tom extended this view and suggested management skills training which included training in practical methods for supporting staff that incorporated issues of ownership, accountability and follow-up would be valuable.

Participants were more likely to transfer their new learning if they engaged in pre-course discussions with their managers and their managers subsequently sponsored their new ideas back in the workplace (Clarke 2002). MV2 identified a significant gap in managerial accountable for learning, providing support to their
direct report's learning transfer and application and support for learning in general. A significant barrier to any workplace transfer of learning was the lack of reinforcement in supporting learning (Newstrom 1986).

5.2.4 Peer support and accountability
A report into managing organisational accountability suggested most organisations practiced vertical accountability (Ray & Elder 2007). Managing accountability was via the chain of command which did little to address the flow of communication and interaction between departments or employees (Ray & Elder 2007). In contrast horizontal accountability was defined as the degree to which peers communicated across the organisation, initiated problem solving actions with other employees and teams, built accountability and created trust between employees and management (Ray & Elder 2007).

In the absence of organisational or manager support for their training, interviewees commented that they reverted to horizontal support and accountability and therefore relied on their peers for ongoing support in transferring and applying their learning. Although in the same organisation, David and Michael expressed their views on the importance of team collaboration and in the sharing of information following their training assisted in the learning transfer and application process:

We did have a lot of discussions with the rest of the team on how we could apply it and the things we learnt... Everybody was very positive and because we all did the training we all had views on how we could apply it - So internally we talked about it a fair bit as a team and sharing information helped make sure that everybody was on track... I think everyone in our team is quite open in their sharing; there was no competitiveness between us which I think is really positive - It was more about the ‘How are you going with this? How did you tackle it and what did you do?’ It’s [peers support] definitely made a difference (David E1GE).

We all had a meeting afterwards [the training] and had a group discussion about the journey we’d been on and all the different little things that we’ve learnt along the way that we’d think ‘Hang on, we could apply that not only to your work but to your life...’ At
the end of it [training] we were fantastic good friends, it was a really good group of people (Michael E8LD).

In the absence of organisational or manager support, team support and peer support were used by David and Michael which provided a clearer direction for their learning transfer and the application of their learning,

A supportive organisational learning environment required vertical integration and support where one succeeding management level reinforced the behaviours of subordinate levels (Caffarella 2001). Whilst the comments above concurred with this suggestion, Caffarella did not discuss what options were available for individuals should this vertical support be unavailable. MV2 findings offered that in an unsupportive learning environment, the use of team and peer support was a viable alternative or approach for learning transfer.

5.2.5 Coaching and mentoring

Contemporary research acknowledged the rise of coaching and mentoring as an effective way of supporting workplace learning (Silverman 2003). The degree to which coaching and mentoring occurred was directly associated with improved performance and positive outcomes (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick 2009). Coaching tended to be viewed as more task-oriented, skills-focused, directed and time-bound whereas mentoring was more focused on open-ended personal development however more recently there appeared to be increasing convergence making these views less distinct in practice (Deans et al. 2007).

Tom commented that individually one has a responsibility for their own learning and development however coaching from their manager would have produced a better outcome. Kirsten expressed concerns with her organisation's lack of coaching and mentoring practices:

There are two issues and it just depends on the circumstance. One is the person not taking enough accountability in their own development and the supervisor not being committed enough to coach the person. At the end of the day it's about two people - the supervisor and the person - having an ongoing commitment to each other; one to learn and the other one to coach. I'm suggesting that if the coach is interested enough to have that
discussion with them before they went on the training course and when they come back that you will probably get a better outcome. If you can’t get those two to take their own responsibilities appropriately then it’s [accountability and coaching] not going to happen (Tom D3MSS).

Coaching is a specialised area and I think that’s where there is a gap in the organisation. It’s something that I believe in the organisation we’re missing (Kirsten C2MSS).

Tom suggested that there needed to be a commitment by both a manager and their direct report to enable a process of coaching and mentoring to occur. The paradox of today’s organisations was that managers within organisations strived to achieve a strategic vision, prioritise organisational goals and meet objectives and believed that preparing and training their employees to meet future challenges was important however did little themselves to actively support and mentor their employees through the learning process (Mattiske 2010).

Deb provided her insight into this issue and suggested managers may not view their organisational role as the coach or mentor of their staff, rather managers perceived employee training as the fix-it-all method that solved an individual’s learning and development issues:

At the moment I think the [managers] are trying to push it [coaching responsibility] away to get somebody else to do it - They think it’s not their problem - Send them to a training course and they’ll know everything and be perfect - Managers don’t see it as their role - They’re not giving that leadership or that mentoring or coaching role (Deb D5LD).

Interviewees, though by far in the minority, commented upon the positive coaching and mentoring they receive on a regular basis. Findings in MV1 supported Northup (2006) that open communication enhanced mutual understanding and enabled improvements in individual performance and organisational effectiveness. Susan and Jean elaborated on their experiences with this open communication environment that had produced positive results in manager support and mentoring:
He’s [my manager] always been extremely supportive - He’s probably played a fair bit of a mentor role as well - He sees the values in transferring the skills that he’s acquired over the years so he supports developing my skills... It doesn’t just happen at the time of performance review, it happens on a weekly basis (Susan E7MSS).

Coaching might not sound like it helps business development but it’s a by-product of having happy employees (Jean B2LD).

Susan and Jeans’ experiences suggested a positive manager relationship and a supportive mentoring environment resulted in enhanced motivation and therefore improved employee performance. A major factor affecting an employee’s workplace learning transfer was the personality, interpersonal skills, knowledge and learning orientation of their manager (Silverman 2003).

Catherine identified the mentoring process she used when working with direct report issues. Whist her organisation did not have any formal coaching and mentoring processes, Catherine possessed the skills to independently coach and mentor her staff:

I don’t know if the company’s view is that mentoring and working with a person is the way to do that [support direct reports]. I identify with the staff that are reporting to me what their strengths and weaknesses are and what they should work on, or the correct way of doing things, but there’s no formalised level of training around mentoring or that sort of thing (Catherine B6MSS).

Most managers interviewed did not possess the independent coaching and mentoring skills Catherine identified. In organisations where people had traditionally been promoted into management roles on the basis of their hard or technical skills as opposed to their soft people management skills, there needed to be further development in these areas or management training that improved soft skills (Silverman 2003).

Emerging from the data were positive outcomes resulting from two organisations assigning coaches or mentors to interviewees. Robert’s organisation (D) engaged external contractors as personal coaches to their senior executive team that
assisted in the learning transfer and application of a change management initiative:

The one thing I have had that is specific and unique to senior executive positions is that the organisation has invested in coaching staff. I’ve never had that kind of personal coach before and I realise the investment the organisation has made in all of the people at my level. It was doubly helpful for me because that gave me an independent perspective. I had somebody else that I could at least talk about my issues with and getting to grips with that. It helps me to see myself as others see me. That was valuable (Robert D6MSS).

The credibility of external coaches and mentors may sometimes be greater as they were likely to have experience within a number of different organisations (Silverman 2003). Members of organisation D’s executive team interviewed reported the continuing value realised from using a personal business coaching approach, however at the time of the interviews expressed reluctance to introduce this approach into lower levels of management. The reasons for this reluctance were unclear however; the cost of the external coaching program for the senior leadership team was expressed as high and therefore extending this program organisation-wide may have been a limiting factor.

Interviewees however, from lower management levels of organisation D, suggested that a coaching and mentoring process would be of value, as Tom put forward “I feel our next step as an organisation was in the coaching area” (D3MSS). Deb reported on the future plans for the coaching program to flow down through organisation D:

For next year we have developed a coaching program so managers learn how to coach their junior staff and the benefits of why they should be doing that. We are making it a request only type thing, so they actually have to acknowledge it in their development action plan for the year and list out what the competencies are they’re lacking in and their goals to achieve for the year and only if it’s in their goals will we give them the coaching training (Deb D5LD).
The success of the external senior executive coaching program in organisation D produced positive results, which had encouraged the organisation to initiate discussions on its own internal coaching and development program for lower level managers.

Few interviewees suggested that managers provided their direct reports with coaching and mentoring. An example of this was Matthew, Emily, Susan and Michael’s positive comments on their organisation’s (organisation E) introduction of an internal coaching and mentoring initiative that was available to all. This initiative assigned personal internal managers as subject matter experts to individuals participating in training. These non-aligned managers from other departments provided support leading up to and clarity during their training and further assisted them in transferring their learning into the workplace:

He [my internal mentor] was part of the advanced leadership development group and part of their role was a mentoring program where he would be our mentor and coach. He wasn’t there to tell us how to run the program but was there as a coach and sounding board and providing some sort of direction as well. So certainly he was supportive from that point of view (Matthew E6MSS).

He [my internal mentor] assisted in the use of the internal processes to complete my training, and also to work on the project and scope out the project and where we were at. That sort of thing. He was more a facilitator (Emily E7MSS).

I think I am in a very fortunate position and in a very fortunate department as well. He [my internal mentor] technically wasn’t assigned as the mentor to the group but he would always ask ‘How is the course?’ What are you learning? How did you find that? Do you need anything? How are you going with the team? Do you need any further support?’ So very open (Susan E7MSS).

We had my manager and we also had a mentor coach which was one of the other managers. I know [my internal mentor] has been involved in a lot of projects before and I know he is really well respected so I think for me to be mentored by him as well was fantastic. I would always ask him questions about the structure and he provided some feedback. Not at any stage did I feel lost, not at any stage did I feel like I was alone or needed anything. Our
coach - we’d ask him some questions and he’d come back to us. So I think we were quite lucky to have that (Michael E8LD).

Organisations typically resourced one-on-one coaching in one of three ways: training their managers to coach their direct reports, assigning internal specialist coaches and commissioning external providers as coaches (Silverman 2003). MV2 findings indicated interviewees supported these forms of resourcing coaching and mentoring, however reported a move toward the second option of assigning internal specialist coaches:

- Organisation D’s move to extend their external coaching and mentoring program to include an internal process was viewed by interviewees as positive.

- Interviewees within organisation E expressed the virtues and value of assigning internal specialist coaches. Interviewees expressed the assigning of an internal or external coach or mentor (i.e. subject matter experts, the stakeholders of the learning or external experts) as the go-to people pre, during and post training increased internal communication practices, reduced the reliance and time constraints on their line managers and assisted learners to consolidate understanding, transfer and apply their workplace learning.

Interviewee comments established that coaching and mentoring from managers as organisational stakeholders (MV2) influenced the learning transfer and application of learning process. Silverman (2003) however cautioned that often the role of an external coach was more focussed as they were just there for coaching and mentoring, whereas internal coaches were likely to have additional roles and responsibilities and therefore coaching and mentoring impacted their job performance.

5.2.6 Post learning follow up
Those who asked for input from key stakeholders learnt from them with a positive non-defensive attitude (Hesselbein, Goldsmith & Beckhard 1997). The support and follow up of stakeholders in a focused efficient manner invariably grew and developed relationships and resulted in increased effectiveness (Hesselbein,
Goldsmith & Beckhard 1997). Amy expressed increased effectiveness in the transfer and application of her learning upon her return to the workplace from training events was due to her manager. Amy's manager had provided learning support and post learning follow up which assisted her when interacting with her direct reports:

Absolutely, we meet almost every day but more formally we probably meet once a week... She [my manager] identified how I could assist staff members in learning and improving their skill set like, 'You know, I think you might be able to learn this way' - So just having that feedback and support was really good (Amy A5MSS).

Amy's experience however was an isolated anecdote and not representative of the majority of interviewees who expressed the lack of support and post learning follow up from their managers as a barrier to their learning transfer.

To have stakeholder engagement effectiveness was to have the stakeholders view taken into account and thus had a real impact on planning, development and implementation process (Danev 2010). Discussed earlier in this chapter; clearly interviewee's managers supported their staff in attending training and encouraged training in general. This supported the first two factors of Danev's (2010) three factors of stakeholder engagement, planning and development. Interviewees commented on post-learning support and follow up and suggested managers did not assist in (Danev's third factor) the implementation phase. Catherine's comments supported this proposition, provided some insight into her experiences within organisation B, and suggested a lack of manager follow up was a barrier to her learning transfer:

Essentially the barrier [to learning transfer] is that there is a lack of support or follow up conducted afterwards... You attend the training and then you're expected to implement it where you feel necessary - So there's no discussion afterwards with my manager, therefore no assistance from the course. It's interesting, as I talk about this I have a clearer view of what maybe some of the issues are - You've identified the need, here's the course, attend it, thanks very much, there's nothing else conducted afterwards which could have a lot of relevance for people - I think all the front end stuff is
great but there's the disconnect - It's the ‘the training has been done and that's the end of it’ issue... Also it [follow up] would be useful for information sharing; person ‘x’ has done it this way and person ‘y’ has done it that way... There are some opportunities [for the organisation] to really make sure that people who have attended have gotten something out of it (Catherine B6MSS).

When implementing strategies that supported workplace learning it was necessary to widen the focus beyond the immediate goals of the initiative and therefore to consider ways in which organisational factors enhanced or inhibited the achievement of successful learning outcomes (Silverman 2003). Catherine’s remarks supported Silverman’s recommendation and suggested her ability to self-initiate learning transfer was connected to the level of support and follow up from her manager, the internal learning and development professionals and current organisational processes:

Yeah, no follow up. They'll [L&D] organise the dates, send the invite and then that's the end of it - There is not anything else - No follow up email, no expression of thoughts of how it went... It's sort of like that is the end of the line - Again, it's done, tick the box and that’s it (Catherine B6MSS).

These comments promoted stakeholder accountability as a tool for improved learning transfer and therefore learning value and positive organisational improvement. Individually Jean offered that she was responsible for her own learning transfer and workplace application and did not receive or sought support or follow up from her manager:

My manager hasn’t followed up on it [training]... Having said that, I guess it’s [my training] for me and my skills... but in terms of following up probably no encouragement (Jean B2LD).

Jean’s experience was not the common view of most interviewees. The majority of interviewees suggested that any follow up from their manager or the learning and development department would have improved their chances of transferring and applying new learning into the workplace. Nerida articulated this interviewee common theme and offered a practical approach to monitoring learning transfer:
In some ways it would be great if they [L&D] could time a follow up... It's not just about on the day ‘Can you do the exercises they set you, but if they set you an example a week or two later can you actually bring it back and bring it to bear?’ I think when you do that it is better (Nerida B3GE).

Barbara explained that not all elements of training were able to be immediately applied, which suggested a process for post learning discussion, support and follow up would therefore be able to identify items immediately applicable with those that can be applied later or those considered redundant:

Not everything is directly or immediately applicable to what you do in your everyday job. If you're doing a course about a specific technique on how to do something but you don’t then use that technique for two years there’s no point following up on ‘How have you used it?’ if you haven’t actually used it (Barbara B1MSS).

Although John’s manager did not provide follow up proactively, his manager did however apply a reactive approach. John described his manager’s approach as helpful in correcting any errors in his work; however, this approach created personal frustration when attempting to correctly transfer and apply his learning independently:

My manager provided feedback only when I attempted to write something then he would review it saying ‘What about what you learnt here? What about adding some of the things that you learnt?’ It’s more reactive, I guess (John D1MSS).

John’s experience suggested a proactive manager approach to post learning support and follow up would be preferential. MV2 findings suggested discussions with line managers that defined what new learning was most applicable prior to workplace learning transfer improved an individual’s confidence and motivation to apply learnt knowledge and or skills correctly.

All but one interviewee expressed a view that follow up from their manager, the learning, development department and or their organisation would have assisted in the transfer and application of their learning, and that the lack of follow up reduced training effectiveness. This suggested individuals, managers and the organisation would benefit from a process of post-learning support and follow up.
A study into leadership of over eight thousand managers within Fortune 100 companies included the impact of introducing a process of feedback and follow up and reported the degree of change in perceived leadership effectiveness was clearly related to the degree of follow up (Hesselbein, Goldsmith & Beckhard 1997).

The analysis of MV2 data indicated that stakeholder ownership of and accountability of learning was low. MV2 data further suggested that employee’s stakeholders, for example, their manager, the organisation or the organisations learning and development professionals provided low learning support and follow-up and largely failed to assist in the implementation of an individual’s new learning. This established that organisational stakeholders (MV2) played a role that influenced an employee’s beliefs of training value and their ability to transfer new learning.

5.3 Organisational stakeholders - MV2 Summary of Results

5.3.1 Introduction
MV2 highlighted the influence organisational stakeholders possessed over an individual learner and identified the accountability of these stakeholders that influenced their learning transfer. MV2 placed importance on examining ways in which organisational stakeholders influenced an individual’s perceptions of the value of their new learning and identified the level of organisational support they received for learning transfer.

Goold's (2006) fifth barrier to learning transfer suggested advocacy at the expense of inquiry where stakeholder influence attacked and or defended behaviour giving little opportunity for new meanings or insights to emerge. MV2 findings correlated with Goold’s fifth barrier and suggested advocacy or support from stakeholders mediated the transfer of an individual’s learning and aligned with Steiner’s (1998) second factor that influenced learning transfer, the individual and the flow-group.

As a result of employees’ beliefs about their opportunities to apply knowledge or skills from training, the likelihood of support and feedback from managers and peers had been assumed to be of chief importance in influencing learning transfer.
This study’s findings highlighted the level of support for an individual’s learning from organisational stakeholders and managerial stakeholders were low and therefore mediated learning transfer.

Findings indicated that stakeholder ownership of and accountability for learning was low and largely failed to assist in the implementation of an individual’s new learning. This suggested the factors of stakeholder ownership and accountability, as offered in MV2, played a role that influenced an employee’s learning transfer.

5.3.2 Organisational stakeholders influencing learning transfer

Four themes emerged from the data analysis on organisational stakeholders (MV2) that influenced an employee’s learning transfer: firstly, organisational ownership and accountability for learning was low; secondly, manager and L&D support and follow up of learning was also low; thirdly, team and peer support was used where other stakeholders failed to provide support and therefore employees self-initiated learning transfer; and fourthly, coaching and mentoring for learning transfer was low. The actions of stakeholders supported or created barriers to learning transfer and therefore mediated learning transfer (Ajzen 1991, 2002; Baldwin & Ford 1988; Goold 2006; Newstrom 1986; Steiner 1998; Taylor, Russ-Eft & Chan 2005).

5.3.2.1 Organisational ownership and accountability

Approaches to the accountability of learning differed within organisations and depending on the issue, the context and the stakeholders involved (Blagescu, De Las Casas & Loyde 2005). This study’s findings concurred with Blagescu et al. and suggested identification of appropriate stakeholders created ownership of and accountability for learning from all levels of management. This stakeholder clarity exposed and supported a connection between the needs of the learner and that of the learner’s stakeholders (Schlenker et al. 1994), which therefore promoted learning transfer.

For any organisational endeavour, the goal was to have stakeholder relationships that created sustainable high-performance organisations (Sloan 2007). MV2 findings suggested that to achieve this goal stakeholder ownership of and accountability for learning from both management and staff was required. This was demonstrated in the MV1 results that indicated without a positive learning
culture or strong direction from the organisation, the outcome was a lack of commitment to training. This study highlighted the influence of senior management as particularly important leading up to training, when attending training and attempting to apply new workplace learning. Senior management therefore mediated the learning transfer process and reported on as an influential stakeholder to an individual’s transfer of workplace learning.

These findings promoted stakeholder ownership of and accountability for learning was a tool for improved learning transfer, provided increased learning value and organisational momentum. The results from this study’s investigation of learning transfer effectiveness highlighted the importance of stakeholder ownership and accountability and therefore provided support for its inclusion as a factor within the adapted activity system analytical framework.

5.3.2.2 Manager support and follow up
A significant barrier to any workplace transfer of learning was the lack of reinforcement in supporting learning (Newstrom 1986). The analysis of data from MV2 supported this statement and identified a significant gap in managers providing support and follow up for their direct report’s learning transfer and application.

MV2 found a proactive manager approach to post learning support and follow up was preferential. Line managers that defined what new learning was most applicable to the workplace improved an individual’s confidence and motivation to apply learnt knowledge and or skills correctly. Management and supervisor support was critical for the success of knowledge management and learning initiatives within organisations (Wang & Noe 2010).

Findings further reported the ability to self-initiate learning transfer was mediated by the level of support and follow up from managers, the internal learning and development professionals and current organisational processes. When implementing strategies that supported workplace learning it was necessary to widen the focus beyond the immediate goals of the initiative and to consider the ways in which organisational factors enhanced or inhibited the achievement of successful learning outcomes (Silverman 2003).
This study's findings indicated that the follow up from managers, the learning and development department and or their organisation assisted in the transfer and application of learning and that the lack of follow up reduced training effectiveness. This suggested individuals, managers and the organisation would benefit from a process of post-learning support and follow up. A study of the impact of introducing a process of feedback and follow up reported that the degree of change in perceived leadership effectiveness was clearly related to the degree of follow-up (Hesselbein, Goldsmith & Beckhard 1997).

MV2 identified the lack of stakeholder support was a critical factor that influenced learning transfer. Perceived supervisor and co-worker's support and encouragement of learning and knowledge sharing increased an employee's knowledge exchange and their perceptions of the usefulness of new knowledge (Cabrera et al., 2006; Kulkarni, Ravindran, & Freeze, 2006). Neither interviewee's managers or their learning and development departments held interviewees accountable for learning transfer and findings suggested with no follow up processes in place stakeholders were unaware of what learning was being transferred. The critical importance of this awareness was offered by Tetlock (1992) that accountability might be thought of as the adhesive that binds the social systems together and without it there would be no capacity to compel individuals to answer for their actions.

Despite any learning from training, an unsupportive organisational learning climate decreased employee commitment to training and the chances for the transfer of trained material (Mathieu, Tannenbaum & Salas 1992). This study's findings added weight to this assessment and to the resultant outcome that an unsupportive organisation or manager created an unsupportive learning transfer climate. The reported low support and follow up from the L&D department and a learner's manager allowed individuals to decide how and what parts of their training they thought was appropriate to be applied in their workplace. The result of this lack of support pre and post learning or follow up reported in these findings left individuals to self-initiate learning transfer independently. Direct reports were subsequently criticised by their manager's for applying learning incorrectly.
The reported low level of support for an individual’s learning from organisational stakeholders and managerial stakeholders influenced their learning transfer. Participants were more likely to transfer their new learning if they engaged in pre-course discussions with their managers and their managers subsequently sponsored their new ideas back in the workplace (Clarke 2002).

5.3.2.3 Team and peer support and accountability
A supportive organisational learning environment required vertical integration and support where one succeeding management level reinforced the behaviours of subordinate levels (Caffarella 2001). Whilst this study’s findings concur with this suggestion, Caffarella did not discuss what options are available for individuals should this vertical support be unavailable. In the absence of organisational or manager support for their training, MV2 findings indicated interviewees reverted to horizontal support and accountability therefore relying on their team and peers for ongoing support in transferring and applying their learning.

A study of best practices addressing the issue of learning transfer recommended trainees were more successful in transferring and applying their learning when encouraged and supported by their peers, co-workers or colleagues (Burke & Hutchens 2008). Support from peers and colleagues are another important dimension of the social aspect of learning transfer within organisations (Malamed 2012). Malamed further suggested that peer support may be even more important than supervisory support in promoting learning transfer. This study’s findings provided further support for the importance of team and peers support and accountability in transferring and applying new learning within organisations.

A supportive workplace learning environment which improved personal development was the competitive strength of the organisation (Burns & Paton 2005). Findings extended this offering and suggested when initiating a supportive workplace learning environment the use of team and peer support was a viable approach for enabling learning transfer.

5.3.3 Coaching and mentoring
The degree to which mentoring and coaching occurred directly related to improved performance and positive outcomes for an organisation (Kirkpatrick &
Kirkpatrick 2009). This study's findings suggested there was a commitment by both a manager and their direct reports to enable a process of coaching and mentoring and that a positive manager relationship and a supportive mentoring environment resulted in enhanced motivation and therefore improved employee performance. A factor that affected an employee's workplace learning transfer was the personality, interpersonal skills, knowledge and learning orientation of their manager (Silverman 2003).

Organisations typically resourced one-on-one coaching in one of three ways: training their managers to coach their direct reports, assigning internal specialists coaches and commissioning external providers as coaches (Silverman 2003).

MV2 findings further indicated the assigning of an external or internal coach and mentor (i.e. expert consultant or subject matter experts as stakeholders of the individual learner) as the go-to person pre, during and post training increased internal communication practices, reduced the reliance and time constraints on managers and assisted learners to consolidate understanding, transfer and apply their workplace learning.

Results therefore identified coaching and mentoring from managers or internal or external coaches as organisational stakeholders (MV2) provided influence over the learning transfer and application of learning process.

5.4 Conclusion

MV2 findings indicated the level of ownership, accountability, support, follow up and coaching for an individual’s learning provided by the organisation, L&D professionals and managers influenced learning transfer. Findings supported MV2 as an overarching learning transfer variable of this study's research instrument and the second variable of the research instrument for investigating organisational learning transfer.

Goold's (2006) fifth barrier to learning transfer (see Chapter 2, table 2.2) identified advocacy at the expense of inquiry and suggested stakeholder influence attacked and or defended behaviour therefore gave little opportunity for new meanings or insights to emerge. Findings from this research aligned with Goold’s fifth barrier
in that advocacy or support from stakeholders influenced the transfer of an individual's learning. Findings supported and extended Goold's view, raising further organisational stakeholder factors that influenced learning transfer.

Four MV2 findings emerged from the data, as outlined above, which provided clarity for and extended the extant literature on learning transfer within organisations. These findings have been included as sub-headings within the fuller discussion of results presented in Chapter 7:

- Stakeholder ownership and accountability for learning
- Support and follow up from senior management, L&D and managers
- Self-initiated learning transfer and the support of teams and peers
- Coaching and mentoring.

MV2 findings outlined above suggested that these identified factors are barriers that influenced learning transfer and should be considered when exploring issues of learning transfer within organisations.

Reported in the following chapter is the analysis of data and results of this study's third moderating variable, organisational actions (MV3). Moderating variable 3 investigated the actions of the individual employee, their motivation to transfer their learning, their level of perceived and actual control over the application of their learning and the managerial and organisational actions that influenced the employee's learning transfer process.
6.1 Introduction

MV3 explored literature on organisational actions that included an individual’s motivation and intentions, the relationship of perceived behavioural control versus actual behavioural control and issues of managerial control that influence the learning transfer climate. MV3 therefore investigated these actions, illustrated as a sub-activity triangle (see figure 6.1) and reported on emergent factors from the research data that enabled or limited individual learners to transfer and apply their workplace learning.

Figure 6.1: Adapted by Author from Engeström (1987) Activity System Analytical Framework.

The best predictors of behaviour are motivations followed by an intention to change a behaviour and that these intentions are considered to be the immediate antecedent of behaviour (Ajzen 2002). According to the theory of planned behaviour (TpB) (see figure 3.9) a behaviour change was achieved by
demonstrating how motivation was first created through beliefs that influenced intentions and secondly how perceptions of control influenced behaviour both directly and indirectly (Ajzen 2002).

Factors such as a learner’s beliefs over the new learning, the opinions of significant others, a learner’s motivation and the learner’s perceived control suggested a positive or negative learning intention and therefore influenced the learner’s motivation before learning occurred (Ajzen 2002). The strength of these intentions and the accuracy of a learner’s perceived behavioural control prior to new learning were significant indicators of how well a learner was capable of applying their new learning (Ajzen 2002).

There remained a substantial gap between intentions and behaviour and that intentions were not always translated into action (Sheeran & Trafimow 2003). One important factor offered by Ajzen (1991) was what he termed ‘intention viability’, which referred to the idea that the realisation of intentions, as a result of an individual’s perceived behavioural control, was occurred only if the person possessed the actual control over the behaviour change and was therefore able to initiate learning transfer. Individuals could have inflated perceptions of control that reduced learning transfer however the greater an individual’s actual control moderated the intention-behaviour relation (Sheeran & Trafimow 2003).

TpB informed this research’s third moderating variable (MV3). This study extended TpB to include Ajzen’s (1991) acknowledged limitation of noting but not including actual behavioural control. Successful performance of behaviour depended upon the degree of control an individual had over internal and external factors which interfered with the execution of an intended action (Ajzen & Madden 1985). Ajzen and Madden further pointed out that an individual’s predictive ability diminished when their behaviour was influenced by factors over which they have limited control.

MV3 explored these relationships by examining causal determinates resulting from the actions and interactions between individual learners, their managers and the organisation that influenced the learning transfer process. These included
organisational actions, learner motivation, actual behavioural control (both with their managers permission and independently) and the learning transfer climate.

6.2 Organisational actions – MV3 Analysis

Successful implementation of organisational learning practices involved the dynamic interaction between knowledge and actions (Hong 2002). Learning entailed an actual act of doing through the transfer and use of existing knowledge as a result of interactions with the social and physical world (Cook & Brown 1999). The coordinated and thoughtful actions of organisations that mobilised the participation of stakeholders, actioned problem-solving processes and shared new knowledge enabled and influenced organisational learning (Hong 2002).

Sustaining individual learning began with an individual’s readiness to perform a given behaviour and was an indication of behavioural intention (Ajzen 2002). Intention was an individual’s attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control weighted for their importance in relation to the potential behaviour change. Control beliefs were an individual’s beliefs about the presence of intrinsic or extrinsic factors that facilitated or impeded the performance of the behaviour (Ajzen 2002). This suggested a learner’s actual ability to transfer and apply new learning was influenced by intrinsic and/or extrinsic factors.

Goold’s (2006) learning transfer barriers two, six, and seven (detailed in chapter 2, table 2.2) suggested organisational actions and the actions of managers and individuals influenced learning transfer. Goold’s barrier two recommended that when behaviour changed, letting go of what was known created space for new learning to embed and involved unlearning old habits and assumptions (intrinsic learning transfer). Goold’s barrier six urged individuals built defensive strategies as a result of anxiety and fear of discussing certain issues with others. This could lead to defensive patterns, which resulted in reduced performance or commitment (a learner motivation). Goold’s barrier seven offered that an individual’s locus of control or the willingness to let go of control and discuss issues collaboratively, which allowed existing power relations to be discussed and questioned (this study’s investigation of perceived versus actual control over learning transfer).

The analysis of data from MV3 is now presented followed by emergent results.
6.2.1 Actions that mediated learner motivation

If a learner believed that the outcome of learning was easily attained and believed that the process of achieving that outcome was within their ability or was convinced by others that the learning outcome of application was achievable then motivation and self-efficacy would be positive (Bandara 1977). Nilsen concurred with Bandara and suggested learners that possessed heightened self-efficacy had a more positive outlook toward completing a task where they believed they were able to succeed (Nilsen 2009).

The actions of several of this study’s research organisations created an environment of apprehension and disinterest toward upcoming training interventions for many of the interviewees. Whilst in the minority, Deb, Terri, and Sandra, referred to their level of motivation as low prior to their training and described this environment of apprehension and disinterest:

I didn't know why I was really doing it [training]. It was a compulsory subject that you had to do - I didn't quite know the motivation of it... Walking into the training I didn't really have a lot to go off and everything I had heard was negative, so it was going to be a waste of time was my thoughts - It was ‘Why am I bothering? Is it going to be worth it? Why are we wasting so much money? (Deb D5LD).

Well it [the training] was something that had to be done... What's the point in performance reviews when it's something that gets done annually and isn’t reflected on throughout the year - what’s the point in doing the training? (Terri A4MSS).

Oh, there's training. What is it? Do I have to go? What's the deal? I didn’t have any concept of what it was and I didn’t have any expectations because I wasn’t really sure (Sandra B5GE).

It was clear from these comments that each of these organisations did not communicate the strategic or personal importance of attending the training intervention to the interviewees, which influenced their learning motivation. These organisational actions or inactions resulted in a lack of motivation on the part of each interviewee to participate in training or have the willingness to apply their new learning.
6.2.1.1 Actions prior to training
Organisational actions prior to training were viewed by the majority of interviewees in a more positive light. Positive learner motivation was able to be encouraged through the communication and reinforcement of learner beliefs around the value of the learning, the normative beliefs that the outcome was of benefit to the learner, that subjective norms were positive and the belief that the new learning was able to be applied (Ajzen 2002). Damon reported that within his organisation, motivation stemmed from their organisational culture:

I think the motivation comes from... when you're making a change and making a significant change, you get a sense of pride, a sense of satisfaction, and that comes from the culture that we've got as an organisation (Damon D2MSS).

Damon’s perception was that his work environment, therefore culture, provided personal motivation to accept the behaviour change, which influenced his attitude toward the organisation. Positive intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were products of an environment that fostered versus undermined positive human potentials (Ryan & Deci 2000b).

Senior manager Cara offered that whilst her organisations may have been supportive of her participation in training, the motivation and initiative to make it happen was to come from within:

If you say you want to do something the organisation is really supportive. If you want to make it happen you have to do it. It doesn’t come from above... So there is encouragement but you’ve got to initiate it. Maybe at this level you do need to do that (Cara C5MSS).

Cara reflected that this self-initiative may be a result of her higher management level within the organisation. This suggested the opposite also occurred and therefore the organisation should take the initiative that offered and encouraged training participation at less senior levels.

6.2.1.2 Personal development as motivation
Human beings were engaged, passive or alienated largely as a function of their social environments and social-contextual conditions that facilitated versus
forestalled the natural processes of self-motivation (Ryan & Deci 2000a). Apprehension toward her upcoming training turned to excitement through self-initiative, self-motivation and personal development in the comments from Kirsten:

Oh heck! I was quite nervous, not knowing what to expect. I was a little anxious and a little nervous and apprehensive. I was a bit ‘Oh, what’s this going to be like?’ a bit apprehensive, but a bit excited at the same time, so motivation was very much around I was excited... We had virtual teams across the country so there’s lots of motivation there around not letting each other down and not letting yourself down - That’s a strong motivation. It [the training] helped me reflect where I am and encouraged me to grow in areas I need to grow in (Kirsten C2MSS).

During the training, Kirsten’s personal motivation continued through group work, encouraging personal growth and in the possibilities for the application of learned material.

These findings supported Ajzen’s (2002) argument discussed above that motivated actions to attend, learn from and apply new learning from training occurred as a result of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Interviewees further commented on their personal experiences and beliefs that influenced their learning motivation.

The dominant views expressed by most interviewees that provided their motivation for training was to support and enhance their career development. This suggested notwithstanding the organisational actions, the actions of their manager or their peers the transfer and application of learning was primarily initiated independently through self-motivation. Interviewee’s Sam, Matthew, Amy, Jean, Catherine and Cate offered their views on this expressed theme:

I wanted to develop myself and develop my career so I wanted to get as much out of the program as I could - My motivation was really to receive a recognised qualification and add to my set of skills that I have and hopefully use throughout my career (Sam E2GE).

Positive about the training and I guess the notion of being nominated and recognised as a potential leader... So leading into the program I always thought that there certainly would be a
benefit not only from a professional development point of view but also hopefully to try to accelerate my progression within the organisation (Matthew E3MSS).

I was excited about it [the training] because I have a particularly small team that I do look after but they are very diverse personalities so there was a lot in that course that I was actually able to use - I believed that it would make me a more confident manager and give me the confidence I needed (Amy A5MSS).

I was excited to be attending and thought that the training would be valuable, in terms of my skill set and teaching me to do things that I don’t know how to do. It was something I really have been pushing for to attend and I saw it [the training] as a benefit to the company but also a benefit to me in up skilling me (Jean B2LD).

I was excited. I was enthusiastic. I was ready to build this skill set - This particular training was something I’d wanted to do for quite some time (Catherine B6MSS).

Excited. Interested to see what I could learn and where it might lead... So that was part of my professional and you could say personal development within the organisation (Cate C1MSS).

Within social contexts such as organisations, differences in motivation and personal growth resulted in people being more self-motivated, energised and integrated in their situation or domain (Ryan & Deci 2000b). The suggestion of self-initiated learning transfer, as discussed further in this chapter, connected perceived behavioural control with actual behavioural control and that actual behavioural control was not influenced solely by extrinsic factors.

6.2.1.3 Reward as motivation

Different motivations reflected differing degrees to which the value and regulation of the requested behaviour was internalised and integrated (Ryan & Deci 2000b). Interviewees expressed a heightened level of motivation through reward that led up to and during their training. Steve and Michael’s perspectives were that their training was offered as a recognition or reward from the organisation for the work they were doing:

When I was offered the training it came out of left field and it felt like a genuine reward and opportunity for me so I sort of took it
on and thought I would treat it that the company has invested an opportunity in me - that's how it made me feel. The immediate one [motivation] personally for me was the satisfaction. I feel like the company really valued me and was able to invest something back into me. And again, with satisfaction it also gave me skills that I can take into other parts of the company too so... I feel like I have a competitive advantage when I'm in a team or I'm negotiating an outcome - I feel a bit more empowered (Steve E5MSS).

For somebody to even think of me - For me to be nominated, that enthused me enough to keep going and saying ‘Well they've got a bit of faith in me; I'm going to repay that back and have a red hot crack at this.’ I've also got a bit of paper saying I've passed everything and for me to have that sort of stuff is personally... a massive thing. Very proud (Michael E8LD).

For Steve and Michael the offer of training altered their perspectives of their organisation and therefore increased their perceptions of their value or worth to the organisation. Both interviewees expressed heightened loyalty to their organisation and increased their self-motivation to attend, transfer and apply their training. Self-motivation contributed to the design of social environments that optimised people’s development, performance and well-being (Ryan & Deci 2000a).

6.2.1.4 Internal communication as motivation
Positive learner motivation was encouraged through the communication and reinforcement of learner beliefs around the value of the learning (Ajzen 2002). Using training as an internal communication tool to meet and associate with other departments and management levels was an approach suggested by some interviewees that provided motivation and encouragement to attend training. Elliot was a recent employee that had transferred to his organisations learning and development department and was one of several interviewees using this internal communication approach:

I was actually excited about the content that was going to be delivered... And very much looking forward to the interactions with the other people in there [at training]... primarily because I was new so this was going to be a great opportunity to start.
interacting with others throughout the organisation... That was my key motivator... The other was the fact that I was going to learn how the organisation operates (Elliot E4LD).

This finding suggested that, as a new member of the L&D team, Elliot’s motivation to participate in training was to improve his internal communication. He believed that regardless of the training course subject, design, content or outcome they were of secondary importance to the opportunity training presented in communicating and networking hierarchically and cross-functionally.

Managers who identified an individual learner’s motivation for transferring and applying learning facilitate motivation, enhanced performance and commitment on the job (Ryan & Deci 2000b). These research findings suggested the actions of the organisation, the manager and peers influenced motivation and therefore mediated a learner’s ability to transfer learning. Further findings identified positive self-motivation as a key factor that enabled a learner to independently transfer and apply new learning where personal career development and perceptions of value and reward were evident.

6.2.2 Perceived versus actual behavioural control

Workplace-learning transfer was the application of trained knowledge and skills on the job (Burke & Hutchins 2007). This broad definition was a consistent theme in literature that suggested the act of learning transfer occurred whenever prior knowledge or skills were affected by the way in which the new knowledge and skills were learned and then performed using that new knowledge or skills (Broad & Newstrom 1992; Cormier & Hagman 1997).

Perceived behavioural control is an individual’s perceived ease or difficulty of performing the particular behaviour (Ajzen 2002). A substantial gap has existed between intentions and behaviour, which resulted in intentions not always being translated into action (Sheeran & Trafimow 2003). From the individual’s perspective, the strength of intentions and the accuracy of a learner’s perceived behavioural control prior to new learning was a significant indicator pre-intervention over how well the learner was able to apply their new learning (Ajzen 2002).
The analysis of data indicated that the strength of intentions and the level of self-motivation encouraged individual learners to independently achieve some level of learning transfer; however, interviewee’s perceived that increased assistance from their managers and the implementation of an organisational process for learning transfer provided value to their efforts in transferring workplace learning.

The term ‘intention viability’, which referred to the idea that the realisation of intentions as a result of an individual’s perceived behavioural control, occurred only if the person possessed the actual control over the behaviour change and was therefore able to initiate learning transfer (Ajzen 1991). MV3 findings supported Ajzen’s term ‘intention validity’, however extended Ajzen’s view by suggesting self-motivation strengthened perceived behavioural control and was an important factor that influenced an individual learner’s actual behavioural control to transfer and apply their new workplace learning.

6.2.2.1 Perceived behavioural control
The retention of post learning knowledge was linked to the level of actual control a learner had over the application of their new workplace learning (Ajzen 2002). The analysis of data indicated actions in the form of assistance for learning transfer and learning application from managers or the organisation was low. Individuals had inflated perceptions of control over the transfer of their learning that reduced learning transfer, however the greater an individual’s actual control moderated the intention-behaviour relation (Sheeran & Trafimow 2003).

Interviewees commented on these perceived abilities to apply new learning into the workplace following training. Michael, David, Elliot and Susan believed they possessed the personal capability and confidence to transfer and apply their learning independently:

Absolutely, yes - I had free reign... I think my manager really encourages that [apply training]. He’s about ‘What can we do to improve stuff? What can we do here? What’s different? Of all the stuff you learn, what can you do to put what you’ve learnt into practice?’ So absolutely free reign to do that and I really enjoyed that - I think my manager is quite good with that (Michael E8LD).
I think I had the confidence in my abilities to be able to apply the learning, yes... I've always been open minded in learning new techniques and systems and I've kept pretty tech savvy with computers and so I was looking forward to getting some more knowledge and being able to apply it to what I already do (David E1GE).

Within a work context, I wanted to learn how to do that - So yeah, I thought I had the capability to do it [apply my learning], yes (Elliot E4LD).

Yes, I had self-confidence... I think when you learn something if you feel comfortable with it [training] you will generally apply it... If I wasn't comfortable with something or one component of what was taught I would ask my [internal] coach or my manager for further explanation, assistance, or clarification as to how they would apply the tools (Susan E7MSS).

Self-confidence, ability and manager permission to apply their new learning into the workplace allowed Michael, David, Elliot and Susan to transform their perceived behavioural control of new learning into actual behavioural control.

Most interviewees possessed Ajzen’s (1991) ‘intention validity’ in the context of their perceived ability to transfer their learning into the workplace, however as identified below several interviewees encountered less than positive organisational and management actions that created learning transfer barriers. As a result interviewees stated that they resorted to peers or their teams for support or to a self-initiated learning transfer and application approach.

6.2.2.2 Barriers to actual behavioural control
When actual behavioural control was high, changes in control beliefs were able to bring their perceived behavioural control in line with their actual behavioural control (Fishbein & Ajzen 2010). Intended behaviours are carried out only if an individual’s personal skills and abilities were sufficient to overcome external barriers that may be encountered, for example bureaucratic barriers or lack of social support (Fishbein & Ajzen 2010). Interviewees commented that whilst they were motivated to transfer and apply their learning into the workplace their managers were less than eager. Peter reflected that the actions of his manager
diluted learning transfer by refusing permission to apply new learning which created a barrier to the workplace application of his learning:

Yes, I did [have difficulty applying my learning] - There is a difference though between me having the ability to apply, yes, but maybe not the permission to apply it - I have some autonomy within my own work colleagues to be able to apply that - I’m not necessarily micro-managed, however my general manager finds it difficult coming to term with change... this is where the resistance often lies - Often we’re sent to the courses and the managers themselves don’t come to the courses to be able to encourage us or give us the permission to apply it, and often what I find personally is that what we learn is somewhat out of synch as our general manager is still practicing the old way, not the way that we are being taught... We [peers] often discuss how practical something might be to apply as well. Sometimes some [training] content is right and sometimes other content is just not right, or we don’t have the permission to apply it (Peter A3LD).

Peter offered the suggestion that if his manager attended the training or was more aware of and accountable for the training content his manager’s resistance to change may perhaps alter. These findings connected manager accountability for learning (MV2) with an individual’s actual behavioural control (MV3) and that these factors enabled or limited the transfer and application of new learning. Peter’s experience indicated a less than positive learning transfer climate, which is discussed later in this chapter.

Interviewees expressed the lack of organisational processes that provided assistance in their learning transfer and that time constraints and work pressures were barriers to their learning transfer and application. This suggested an interrelationship with the level of learning processes discussed in Chapter 4 (MV1) with the actions of the organisation, as Cara and Bronwyn suggested, the momentum to transfer and apply new learning was easily lost upon returning to the workplace:

You get enthused about training and passionate about creating change, so you come back and you try to have that conversation and you are hit with this workload stuff. It’s a barrier [to applying
learning] and also about people needing time to understand and come along for the journey (Cara C5MSS).

A lot of the training that we do is very useful... I think the problem with training is it’s really great at the time and then you tend to go back and you collapse into your old ways and don’t actually apply what you’ve learnt, which is a real shame (Bronwyn B7MSS).

Cara and Bronwyn’s comments suggested there was a need for a process within their organisation that supported an individual learner’s transfer and application upon returning to the workplace. All learning events benefited from additional actions specific to supporting the transfer of learning to the workplace (WilsonLearningWorldwide 2009). Cara’s comments extended this notion of transfer and application support to include increased support from other employees and perhaps managers that have not attended the same training, which further supported Peter’s remarks above.

### 6.2.3 Learning transfer climate

#### 6.2.3.1 Learner’s need for learning transfer support

Supervisor support is an important dimension of the social aspect of learning, and refers to the extent managers and supervisors reinforced and promoted the use of new skills on the job (Malamed 2013). Interviewees expressed a need for this support and or the reassurance on how or what learning to apply following training. Clearly, Catherine, Emily, Susan and Jessica felt uncomfortable with the processes for applying their learning or were unable to receive guidance from their managers. In the case of Catherine, her expectation were that this transfer and application of learning guidance needed to be provided within the training content or by the training facilitator rather than received from her manager:

No, actually it was more of a hope that I could [apply my learning] - I could see what the objectives of the training were and see relevance but whether that training course gave me those skills or not is a different story (Catherine B6MSS).

Yeah, I thought I would be able to [apply my learning]. I believed I could but I didn’t know how to - I didn’t know how to do it (Emily E6MSS).
I would like to get faster at applying that so it [training] is ingrained (Susan E7MSS).

I had that really brief discussion [with my manager], about ‘Well I’ve been given these skills, do I use them? Will I be getting myself into strife if I start using them?’… He said ‘its information and you should use common sense. If you feel comfortable using it then you should’… But there’s nothing worse than when you see someone who has learnt something somewhere and they believe it to be true and then start applying it across the board and everyone behind them is going, that’s incorrect - I very clearly didn’t want to be that person in my organisation with the wrong information, so I asked more questions before I applied it - For me you just go and do it by yourself most of the time but with some discussions on the practical application (Jessica C3LD).

These comments indicated hesitancy in transferring new workplace learning that stemmed from their lack of skills and in Jessica’s case, her perceptions were compounded by the thought of embarrassment if she applied workplace learning incorrectly. This had prompted her requests for further learning support.

In further comments interviewees Cara, Peter and Catherine expressed frustration at the lack of organisational or managerial follow up in aiding them in their learning transfer:

Its that ‘Was it [training] relevant, okay are you using it.’ It’s actually building in the time to stop and reflect and that’s from individual to team to leadership development. I think as an organisation we’ve done training that was rolled out and we never go back as an organisation, and say ‘So, did we pick anything up from that training?’ We don’t go back and check and see (Cara C5MSS).

It’s of interest to the organisation that it’s applied learning. But there isn’t that ongoing ‘How are you going? Is it working for you? Do you want to come back and do a refresher on one part of it?’ We probably don’t do that part of it that well and it may have a negative impact on the business - We should introduce some ways of measuring the success of the outcome of the training (Peter A3LD).

There’s the barrier that you’ve learnt this ‘now apply it or don’t apply it’ - It’s up to you… So there is no follow up - I think it
[follow up] would help... It’s how you apply what you have learnt from a box of skills and how you can translate that into what you do... I think it would then give more importance to training... That’s not being done for any of the courses that are being conducted here... The fact of ‘this is how it used to be done’ and ‘this is how it’s being done now’... Training is important but there’s a lot of backend stuff that is not being done which takes away from the importance of it’ - I think there is an element of people unwilling to talk about it (Catherine B6MSS).

These organisational actions created barriers for Cara, Peter and Catherine when attempting to transfer their learning, which aligned with issues of stakeholder accountability discussed above and outlined in Chapter 5 (MV2).

MV3 findings highlighted the lack of organisational actions, which limited a learner’s ability to transfer and apply learning, created a barrier to learning transfer. Learning transfer was the weak link in most corporate training initiatives and in the absence of organisational learning transfer assistance interviewees sought alternative methods in applying their new workplace learning (Jefferson 2011).

6.2.3.2 Self-initiated learning transfer
The transfer of post learning knowledge was linked to the level of actual control a learner had over the application of their new workplace learning (Ajzen 2002). Self-initiated learning transfer however, emerged as an unexpected finding from the research data. Interviewees expressed this notion and suggested that with limited or no involvement from their organisation or support from their managers, they took responsibility for the transfer and application of their own learning independently. This self-motivation, as discussed above, strengthened a learner’s perceived behavioural control and therefore was an important factor that influenced an individual learner’s actual behavioural control to transfer and apply their new workplace learning.

James, Bronwyn, Nerida and Elliot reflected that regardless of the level of support they received, it was their own responsibility to apply their learning autonomously and therefore self-initiated learning transfer independently:
I just got on with it, that’s basically it... you do the theory but then you’re left to do practical side of it, rather than having some shadowing or support through the whole process (James A1GE).

I’d say nothing on that front [assistance to apply learning]. It’s sort of left up to the individual - It’s about how you approach that, rather than necessarily HR saying ‘You need to do this’ or your manager saying ‘You should be doing this’. I think in the end it is more up to the individual (Bronwyn B7MSS).

It’s more about just me getting on with it rather than my manager being involved. Generally, I apply things anyway or have my own way of getting to the end point so there wasn’t really much involvement from my manager. I’m at the level where it’s just about getting it done and there’s a lot less one on one mentoring (Nerida B3GE).

My team of managers are reasonably high level in the organisation and should be able to apply something that they've learned so I would assume that they would be able to take the important parts out of it [training] and apply it. I don’t know if I need to spoon feed them around how they are applying it (Jessica C3LD).

It [training] has been for me difficult to apply... I think a lot of the assessment tasks [for training] actually forced me to do a lot of those things in my day to day work, and allowed you to apply theory to the everyday (Elliot E4LD).

MV3 findings reported self-initiated learning transfer and application of learning was common within organisations. James, Bronwyn, Nerida and Elliot’s comments above suggested that within all organisations researched, with the exception of organisation D, a mix of interviewees viewed learning transfer as their own responsibility. These findings were in direct contradiction with previous comments that indicated frustration or a lack of skills in transferring their learning when confronted with low organisational or managerial support. What was clear from the findings was that organisation D did have some process, albeit limited, for learning transfer and manager support, which interviewees valued. This suggested a connection between the level of manager support and that of interviewee’s perceptions that self-initiated learning transfer was warranted.
Contributing to low learning transfer that resulted from limited organisational or managerial support or any involvement that assisted in learning transfer was influenced by several factors as previously outlined in Chapter 4 (MV1). Interviewees suggested the factors of time constraints, hierarchical level, methods of assessment and the independent nature of the employee/manager interrelationships compounded this low support and added further barriers to learning transfer. The findings identified therefore, if motivation to transfer and apply learning was high, regardless of the level of assistance from the organisation or management, learners felt the need to self-initiate learning transfer independently. This further suggested that self-initiated learning transfer occurred out of necessity where organisational or manager support for learning transfer was low.

**6.2.3.3 Processes for learning transfer**

Organisational processes must actively encourage and support learning and since individuals operated both independently and interdependently it was their socially-derived personal history, values and motivation that mediated how they participated and learnt within the workplace (Pircher, Zenk & Risku 2008). As discussed in the findings above, learner motivation was an important factor prior to any learning intervention however Damon extended this finding and suggested an organisational process for the immediate application of post training knowledge provided an organisational motivation that produced actual results:

What we try to do as a business team is get the people to put their learning into practice as quickly as possible - We do have some courses that are of a highly technical nature with regards to data interrogation and data manipulation and if you don’t use it soon after being trained in it you lose it. Immediate application is where you actually see the results (Damon D2MSS).

Damon’s view supported the need for a learning transfer process that included the identification that explicit organisational objectives had been achieved, methods for thoughtful, accurate but urgent learning application were developed and a process for the assessment of learning transfer was established. A learning transfer process would therefore be able to identify results from organisational learning and the benefits it brought.
Nerida, as previously reported, independently applied her new learning and did not seek assistance from her manager, however suggested a process that supported learning transfer immediately following training would be beneficial:

I think it would have been helpful to have follow up exercises or activities - that would make it easier to apply in ways that made a tangible benefit - it’s really about applying that [training] as soon as you can to make it more concrete for yourself (Nerida B3GE).

Nerida’s identified that a process for learning transfer would be beneficial to an individual, however Kirsten and Catherine, whilst supportive of this suggestion, expressed the benefits to the organisation:

I guess probably from that [training] it has been an individual’s journey what you take away, so there has been no - which is a shame really - assurance that people are implementing some of these strategies (Kirsten C2MSS).

I guess with training – you attend a training course, you learn from it and you apply it off your own back, essentially. Linking back to the development plans sometimes there is something written in there that says ‘You gain this skill and provide some examples of how you have used it’, so from that perspective sometimes it is applied but for me there was no discussion with the manager afterwards - So that was my decision and I applied it where I could... The danger is having somebody attended a course for two days and yeah, I’ve learnt some stuff but that’s it (Catherine B6MSS).

Kirsten and Catherine reported concerns that self-initiated or independent application of learning resulted in variable training outcomes and therefore variable organisational benefits.

The findings identified only one of the five organisations researched had any form of process for assisting employees to transfer and apply their new learning, however many interviewees viewed a learning transfer process of value to both themselves and the organisation. Organisations that provided influence and supported its knowledge management capabilities by the deployment and integration of available methods, instruments and technologies were providing a beneficial environment for the creation and use of knowledge (Pircher, Zenk &
Risku 2008). These findings link the actions or inactions of the organisation (MV3) with the findings from formal rules and organisational processes that emerged within Chapter 4 (MV1) as discussed further in Chapter 7.

6.2.3.4 Learning transfer using team support
The behaviours, attitudes and expectations of managers and co-workers supported and promoted learning (TeamManagementSystems 2012). Discussed in the MV3 findings were the influences and actions or inactions of managers that mediated learning transfer, however interviewees expressed the importance of team, co-worker or peer support. In addition to self-initiated learning transfer, interviewees reported that in the absence of organisational or management learning transfer assistance they resorted to and sought peer assistance. James offered that in his organisation it was uncommon to seek manager support for learning transfer instead relied on team discussions:

I didn’t go back to my manager and say ‘I’ve learnt this and I want to apply it’. It was more that I put the application in place and then my manager saw the outcomes of it - I found it [training] helped me internally in my processes but did not necessarily discuss it with my manager... It was more having the whole team go through the training - I think if we didn’t have the team go through the training and I was a lone voice coming back saying ‘I’ve learnt this, let’s try and implement this’ I think the success rate would have been lower - With the whole team involved everybody could see clearly the outcome and that’s so important (James A1GE).

James pointed out that in his experience team involvement and discussion assisted in, added a collaborative voice to his learning transfer, and therefore enabled a more confident environment to transfer and apply his new learning. This finding was supported by Holton and Bates (2000) who included within their learning transfer system inventory (LSTI) the factor of a strong team culture, which indicated that team or peer support was a predictor of learning transfer.

6.2.3.5 Positive learning transfer climate
A learning transfer climate is the perceived state through which the work environment affected work attitudes and behaviours that led to actions (Kopelman, Brief & Guzzo 1990). The learning transfer climate is a mediating
variable in the relationship between the organisational context and an individual's attitude towards the job and the behaviour and actions on the job (Mathieu, Tannenbaum & Salas 1992). Mathieu et al. proposed that even when learning occurred, the learning transfer climate either supported or inhibited its application into the workplace.

This study's findings suggested a positive learning transfer climate included: firstly, the alignment of learning to personal and professional needs, together with open communication between managers and their direct reports, as outlined in Chapter 4 (MV1); secondly, a supportive manager environment, as discussed in Chapter 5 (MV2); and thirdly, high individual motivation and supportive organisational actions, as expressed in Chapter 6 (MV3). Sandra commented on how the actions of her manager reflected this climate and mediated the level of her motivation to attend, transfer and apply workplace learning:

Once she [my manager] understood what the training was going to offer, I thought 'This is going to be great' - it [the training] was on adult learning styles and how to engage different audiences - that's a big part of my job, how to read people and how to more effectively gauge people so it was absolutely relevant (Sandra B5GE).

Once an understanding of the alignment and potential application of Sandra's upcoming training was reached Sandra's manager supported her attendance. This suggested the importance of effective communication, the needs of the learner and the alignment of training to both job and organisational objectives. Organisations that provided supportive environments enabled quality learning to take place both individually and collectively, which encouraged the successful transfer of knowledge and skills into the workplace (Goold 2006).

Sandra's reflection on the positive learning transfer climate, promoted by her relationship with her manager, supported findings above that when a manager was engaged with the learning, had ownership and accountability for the learning, then enhanced motivation to transfer learning occurred. This study further found that the opposite also occurred, indicated by comments on the disengagement and lack of accountability, support and follow up from managers had reduced learning
transfer. The paradox of today's organisations was that managers within organisations strived to achieve a strategic vision, prioritised organisational goals and meet objectives, and believed that preparing and training their employees to meet future challenges was important, however did little themselves to actively support and mentor their employees through the learning process (Mattiske 2010).

This study explored the actions of managers and others that influenced an individual’s ability to transfer their learning. Individuals actually perceived the learning transfer climate according to the organisational cues of supervisor, peer, task or self (Rouillier & Goldstein 1993). The organisational learning transfer climate highlighted individual expectations, perceptions and interpretations of the organisational culture (Denison 1996). This suggested organisational or managerial actions resulted in the mediation of learner motivation to participate in training or have the willingness, self-initiative or permission to transfer and apply their new workplace learning.

These findings suggested organisational and managerial actions mediated a learner’s motivation and influenced a learner’s ability to transfer their learning into the workplace. Where motivation and assistance was low, interviewees sought assistance from their team or peers. Where employee motivation was high and organisational or managerial support was low, many interviewees reverted to self-initiated learning transfer and the application of their workplace learning independently.

6.3 Organisational actions - MV3 Summary of Results

6.3.1 Introduction
Organisational processes must actively encourage and support learning and since individuals could be seen as operating both independently and interdependently it was their socially-derived personal history, values and motivation that mediated how they participated and learnt in the workplace (Pircher, Zenk & Risku 2008). Results from the analysis of data reported on individuals’ experiences and beliefs of intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influenced learning transfer within the context of moderating variable 3 (MV3).
MV3 results indicated organisational actions mediated an individual’s motivation toward learning transfer intentions and an employee’s ability to transfer and apply their workplace learning in two ways:

- Managerial actions enabled or limited an individual learner’s actions
- Organisational actions influenced the relationship of perceived behavioural control versus actual behavioural control.

These findings provided weight to Goold’s (2006) learning transfer barriers two, six, and seven (see chapter 2, table 2.2) which suggested organisational actions, the actions of managers and peers mediated learning transfer. Findings also concurred with Steiner’s third factor influencing learning transfer within organisations, managerial actions (Steiner 1998).

Learning entailed an actual act of doing through the transfer and use of existing knowledge as a result of interactions with the social and physical world (Cook & Brown 1999). MV3 findings indicated motivation enhanced this act of doing and therefore the level of control a learner possessed in transferring and applying their new workplace learning. In the absence of a positive learning transfer climate, where managers or the organisation failed to provide adequate learning support, high learner motivation facilitated learning transfer.

Whilst findings offered learner motivation as an important factor prior to and following any learning intervention, organisational motivation was also important. Results recommended an organisational process for the immediate actioning of learning transfer and application provided organisational motivation that produced actual results.

### 6.3.2 Motivation

Factors such as a learner’s beliefs over the new learning, the opinions of significant others, a learner’s motivation and the learner’s perceived control suggested a positive or negative learning intention and therefore influenced the learner’s motivation before learning occurred (Ajzen 2002). If a learner believed the outcome of learning was easily attained and believed the process of achieving that outcome was within their ability or was convinced by others that the learning
outcome, application, was achievable then motivation and self-efficacy would be positive (Bandara 1977). Nilsen concurred with Bandara and suggested learners that possessed heightened self-efficacy would have a more positive outlook toward completing a task where they believed they could succeed (Nilsen 2009).

This study's findings suggested organisations did not communicate the strategic or personal importance of attending the training intervention to employees, which influenced their learning motivation. These organisational actions or inactions resulted in a lack of motivation on the part of employees to participate in training or have the willingness to transfer and apply their new learning. Positive learner motivation was encouraged through the communication and reinforcement of learner beliefs around the value of the learning (Ajzen 2002).

The analysis of MV3 data indicated that actions in the form of assistance for learning transfer and application from managers or the organisation was low. Despite this low assistance, motivated individual learners transferred their learning independently and achieved some level of learning application. Employees perceived that increased assistance from managers or the implementation of an organisational process for learning transfer added value to their efforts in transferring their workplace learning.

Managers who identified an individual learner’s motivation for transferring and applying learning facilitated motivation and enhanced performance and commitment on the job (Ryan & Deci 2000b). The research findings suggested the actions of the organisation, the manager and peers influenced motivation and therefore enabled or limited a learner’s ability to transfer learning.

The term ‘intention viability’ (Ajzen 1991) referred to the idea that the realisation of intentions as a result of an individual’s perceived behavioural control occurred only if the person possessed the actual control over the behaviour change and was therefore able to initiate learning transfer. Findings supported Ajzen’s term ‘intention validity’ however extended Ajzen’s view and suggested self-motivation strengthened perceived behavioural control and was an important factor that influenced an individual learner’s actual behavioural control to transfer and apply new workplace learning.
Findings further identified personal career development and perceptions of value and reward were positive self-motivators that enabled a learner to independently transfer and apply new learning. Within social contexts such as organisations differences in motivation and personal growth resulted in people being more self-motivated, energised and integrated in their situation or domain (Ryan & Deci 2000b). The suggestion of self-motivated learning transfer interconnected perceived behavioural control with actual behavioural control and suggested actual behavioural control was not mediated solely by extrinsic factors.

Emerging for the analysis of data was the suggestion that new employees were motivated to attend training as a means to facilitate internal communication. The training course subject, design, content, or outcome were of secondary importance to the opportunity training presented for communicating and networking hierarchically and cross-functionally.

### 6.3.3 Perceived versus actual behavioural control

Perceived behavioural control was an individual’s perceived ease or difficulty of performing the particular behaviour (Ajzen 2002). A substantial gap existed between intentions and behaviour, which resulted in intentions not always being translated into action (Sheeran & Trafimow 2003). From the individual’s perspective, the strength of intentions and the accuracy of a learner’s perceived behavioural control prior to new learning was a significant indicator pre-intervention over how well the learner was able to apply their new learning (Ajzen 2002).

The level of an individual’s perceived behavioural control often exceeded the actual level of behavioural control that an individual had over their learning environment and therefore the transfer and application of their new learning (Ajzen 2002). MV3 findings supported Ajzen’s suggestions above that actual behavioural control was influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic environmental factors and actions. This study however extended this concept, as discussed above, and suggested independent motivation led to self-initiated learning transfer and application of learning and was therefore a factor that mediated actual behavioural control.
Individuals had inflated perceptions of control over the transfer of their learning that in reality reduced learning transfer however the greater an individual's actual control moderated the intention-behaviour relation (Sheeran & Trafimow 2003). Results further indicated self-confidence, ability and the level of manager permission to apply their new learning into the workplace were factors that transformed perceived behavioural control of new learning into actual behavioural control by enabling workplace application. This suggested that regardless of the actions of managers or the organisation, learners transferred their learning into the workplace independently where motivation to do so was high. When actual behavioural control was high, changes in control beliefs were able to bring their perceived behavioural control in line with their actual behavioural control (Fishbein & Ajzen 2010).

An intended behaviour was able to be carried out only if an individual’s personal skills and abilities were sufficient to overcome external barriers that may be encountered, for example, bureaucratic barriers or lack of social support (Fishbein & Ajzen 2010). Whilst motivation, self-confidence and ability were identified as factors enabling self-initiated learning transfer, this study found the actions of managers diluted this ability by refusing permission to transfer learning and therefore indicated that this less than positive learning transfer climate did create a barrier to the workplace application of learning.

6.3.4 Learning transfer
Successful implementation of organisational learning practices involved a dynamic interaction between knowledge and actions (Hong 2002). The analysis of data reported the need for employee support on how or what to apply following training and suggested the lack of organisational actions in assisting a learner’s application of learning created a barrier to learning transfer. Learning transfer was the weak link in most corporate training initiatives (Jefferson 2011).

Supervisor support was an important dimension of the social aspect of learning and referred to the extent that managers and supervisors reinforced and promoted the use of new skills on the job (Malamed 2013). When difficulties arose in applying new learning and managers did not apply a proactive approach to
learning transfer, MV3 findings indicated employee embarrassment and a reluctance or lack of skills on the part of many employees to seek clarification and learning application assistance.

This study acknowledged the need for a learning transfer process that included the identification of the explicit organisational objectives that have been achieved, methods for measured but urgent application of learning and a process of assessing learning transfer, application and results. Organisations must influence and support knowledge management capabilities by deploying and integrating available methods, instruments and technologies that provided a beneficial environment for the creation and use of knowledge (Pircher, Zenk & Risku 2008). Findings drew connections or interrelationships with the actions or inactions of organisations (MV3) and the organisational processes for learning from Chapter 4 (MV1). These interrelationships are discussed in Chapter 7.

Low learning transfer resulted from limited organisational or managerial support or involvement that assisted learning transfer and were influenced by several factors outlined in this chapter and in Chapter 4 (MV1) and 5 (MV2). Analysis suggested that the factors of low organisational or managerial follow up, limited learning processes, time constraints, hierarchical level, methods of assessment, the independent nature of the employee/manager interrelationships and the influence of stakeholders compounded this low support and added further barriers to learning transfer.

In the absence of organisational or managerial learning transfer assistance, the findings indicated interviewees identified two alternative methods employees used for applying their new workplace learning were firstly, they sought team and peer support; and secondly, they self-initiated their learning transfer independently.

6.3.4.1 Self-initiated learning transfer and application

The transfer of post learning knowledge is linked to the level of actual control a learner had over the application of their new workplace learning (Ajzen 2002). Self-initiated learning transfer emerged from the analysis of data. With limited or no involvement from their organisation or support from their managers,
employees took responsibility for the transfer and application of their own learning independently. This suggested self-motivation strengthened a learner's perceived behavioural control. With limited or no involvement from their organisation or support from their managers, highly motivated learners self-initiated learning transfer. High motivation was therefore an emergent factor that influenced a learner's actual behavioural control to transfer and apply new workplace learning independently.

Interviewees reported self-initiated learning transfer and application of learning was common within organisations. In all but one organisation researched, employees viewed learning transfer as their own responsibility. This in part may have been their only option due to the lack of learning processes and limited organisational and managerial support for learning transfer they were offered. These findings are in contradiction with previous data indicating frustration or a lack of skills in transferring their learning without organisational or managerial support. What was clear from the findings was that organisation D had some process, albeit limited, for learning transfer and manager support, which employees valued. This suggested a relationship between the level of manager support and an employee’s perceptions that self-initiated learning transfer was warranted.

Findings suggested therefore, if motivation to transfer and apply learning was high regardless of the level of assistance from the organisation or management, learners self-initiated learning transfer independently. This further suggested that self-initiated learning transfer occurred out of necessity where manager support for learning transfer was low. This study however reported concerns that self-initiated or independent application of learning resulted in variable training outcomes and therefore inconsistent organisational benefits.

6.3.4.2 **Team and peers supporting learning transfer**

MV3 identified the relevance and importance of team and peer support. The behaviours, attitudes and expectations of managers and co-workers supported and promoted learning (TeamManagementSystems 2012).
Reported above was in the absence of organisational or management learning transfer assistance and where motivation was high, employees resorted to self-initiated learning transfer. In a further finding, employees noted that in the absence of organisational or management learning transfer assistance, they sought the assistance, support and guidance from team members and peers in an effort to transfer and apply new workplace learning appropriately.

This study identified team and peer involvement added a collaborative voice to facilitate learning transfer and the application of new learning. This collaborative voice strengthened learning application as a group and increased learner motivation to transfer their new learning with less concern arising from a unsupportive but reactive approach from the organisation or their manager. Holton and Bates (2000) included in their learning transfer system inventory (LSTI), the factor of a strong team culture which indicated team or peer support was a predictor of learning transfer.

These findings added weight to the concerns identified above that self-initiated or independent application of learning resulted in variable training outcomes and therefore inconsistent organisational benefits.

6.3.4.3 Learning transfer climate
The learning transfer climate was a mediating variable in the relationship between the organisational context and an individual’s attitude towards the job and the behaviour and actions on the job and that even when learning occurred the learning transfer climate may either enable or inhibit its application in the workplace (Mathieu, Tannenbaum & Salas 1992). Findings offered effective communication, alignment of training to the needs of the learner and alignment to both job and organisational objectives provided enhanced manager understanding and therefore manager support for training initiatives. The actions of managers and others therefore influenced an individual’s ability to transfer their learning. Individuals perceived the learning transfer climate according to the organisational cues of supervisor, peer, task or self (Rouillier & Goldstein 1993).

MV3 findings indicated that when employees’ managers were engaged with the learning and accountable for the learning, enhanced motivation to transfer
learning occurred, which created a positive learning transfer climate. Organisations that provided supportive environments that enabled quality learning to take place individually and collectively were encouraging the successful transfer of knowledge and skills into the workplace (Goold 2006). Findings reported the opposite also occurred and suggested disengagement and a lack of accountability, support and follow up reduced learning transfer. Managers within organisations strived to achieve a strategic vision, prioritised organisational goals that met these objectives and believed that preparing and training their employees to meet future challenges was important, however did little themselves to actively support and mentor their employees through the learning process (Mattiske 2010).

A further finding suggested manager attendance at training created an awareness of and accountability for the training content and therefore altered resistance to change that mediated the learning transfer climate. From this study's findings, a relationship that connected the level of manager accountability for learning (MV2) with an individual’s actual behavioural control (MV3) to transfer and apply new learning emerged as discussed in Chapter 7.

MV3 findings suggested organisational and managerial actions mediated a learner’s motivation and influenced a learner’s ability to transfer their learning into the workplace. Where motivation and assistance in transferring learning was low, employees resorted to team and peer support. Where motivation was high, many interviewees reverted to self-initiated learning transfer and workplace application of learning independently.

### 6.4 Conclusion

Organisational or managerial actions resulted in the mediation of learner motivation to participate in training or have the willingness, self-initiative or permission to transfer and apply their new workplace learning have been summarised in this chapter. The findings therefore supported MV3 as an overarching learning transfer variable and sub-activity triangle of this study’s activity system research instrument.
This study's findings aligned with Goold's (2006) organisational learning transfer barriers two, six, and seven (see chapter 2, table 2.2). Ajzen's (2002) term ‘intention validity’ and his statement that the reinforcement of learning application was therefore verified once positive individual beliefs and motivation have been established and only then would a learner have a positive intention to learn (Ajzen 2002).

MV3 findings concurred with Ajzen's (2002) statement above and suggested that high learner motivation overcame low or negative organisational or management assistance for learning transfer and application and therefore learners may self-initiate transfer and application independently. Findings suggested the actions of the organisation, the manager and peers influenced motivation and therefore mediated a learner's ability to transfer learning. MV3 findings further identified positive self-motivation was a key factor that enabled a learner to independently transfer and apply new learning where personal career development and perceptions of value and reward were evident. This suggested self-motivation led to self-initiated learning transfer and was a factor that influenced an individual learner's learning transfer and workplace application of learning.

Findings further suggested organisational and managerial actions mediated a learner's motivation and did influence a learner's ability to transfer their learning into the workplace where learner motivation and assistance was low and the organisational learning transfer climate was unsupportive.

In the context of MV3, results indicated a highly motivated learner overcame the influence of the organisational learning environment and culture and the restrictive influences and actions of the organisation or stakeholders by self-initiating learning transfer and application of learning independently.

MV3 findings below emerged from the data, provided clarity for and extended the extant literature on learning transfer within organisations. These findings have been included as sub-headings within the fuller discussion of results presented in Chapter 7:

- Organisational and managerial actions mediated a learner's motivation
• Self-motivation enhanced perceived behavioural control and therefore actual behavioural control

• Actions of the organisation and managers, in part, form the learning transfer climate

• Support and guidance from team members and peers assisted in appropriate learning transfer.

This chapter's findings outlined above suggested influencing factors as barriers to learning transfer and needed to be considered when exploring issues of learning transfer within organisations. Chapter 7 presents a discussion of research results, offers interrelationships or connections identified in the analysis of data between the three moderating variables, outlines the suitability of an activity system analytical framework as a research instrument or diagnostic, summarises the contribution of this study to knowledge, provides conclusions, suggests limitations of the study and provides recommendations and implications for further research.
CHAPTER SEVEN
Discussion and Conclusions

7.1 Introduction
Learning transfer literature was presented in Chapter 2 and literature supporting this study’s three moderating variables, the research design and a research instrument was identified in chapter 3. This research instrument provided a method of research alignment to study objectives that enabled processes for question development, the collection of data and the analysis of data to be advanced.

Presented and discussed in this chapter is a discussion of the key research results followed by study conclusions. Emergent themes from the summary of results outlined in Chapter 4, 5 and 6 are discussed together with study conclusions of themes arising interconnecting each of the three moderating variables MV1, MV2 and MV3. These connections describe interrelationships with the workplace learner (the subject), moderating variables (MV1, MV2 and MV3) and learning transfer (the object) as illustrated by the interconnecting arrows and sub-activity triangles of the research instrument.

In this chapter, the third research aim, the suitability and application of the adapted activity system analytical framework as a research instrument and diagnostic for investigating barriers to learning transfer, is argued. The discussion includes a summary of contribution to knowledge within this study’s conclusions, followed by limitations, recommendations and implications for further research.

This discussion is based on two independent sources of data. Firstly, thirty-one semi-structured interviews across five Australian organisations, which formed the primary data from which analysis and results emerged. These were outlined in Chapter 4, 5, and 6 and provided key themes for discussion. The second source of data was the researchers’ observation notes. The researcher observed controlled and uncontrolled variables of the interviewee’s personal and environmental characteristics during each of their interviews.
Themes emerged from the analysis of interview data, which provided areas for discussion. The researcher's observation notes were analysed with relevant information chosen in support of research results and emergent themes. These results, themes and notes developed the following discussion. Selected observation notes provided support for this discussion (see full researchers’ observation notes in Appendix V).

7.1.1 Discussion: Organisational environment – MV1

Organisations viewed training as an essential part of business, however transforming new learning into application had a strong relationship with the structure, nature and influence of the organisational learning culture. Results emerged on organisational environment (MV1) which identified six factors that influenced learning transfer within organisations:

- Influence of hierarchy and seniority
- Competitive work environment
- Time constraints and work pressures
- Internal communication practices and relationships
- Organisational and individual perceptions of training value
- Effectiveness of organisational learning processes and needs analysis.

These emergent themes arising from MV1 results are now discussed.

7.1.1.1 Influence of hierarchy and seniority

Findings proposed that organisational seniority influenced an employee's commitment to training and the transfer and application of new learning both positively and negatively.

The researcher observed organisation A operated in a conservative industry and had a hierarchical business model that appeared to promote resistance to change. Long-term employees, particularly managers, were reluctant to change their behaviours to new or more updated business methods and were therefore resistant to providing organisational learning support for their staff. This was
supported by general comments from employees in organisation D where following training senior managers reverted to old pre-training behaviours upon returning to the workplace.

The CEO of organisation D however was the driving force behind their regulatory and professional development training. Interviewees indicated this was due to the CEO’s personal accountability for all government, industry and public reporting.

In contrast, it was noted organisation C’s CEO initiated several organisational change measures including learning and development. These measures commenced with the implementation of a 360-degree constructive feedback process on managers. Interviewees agreed that comments expressed in the 360-degree feedback from direct reports were of value, however employees expressed concerns that in their attempts to respond honestly to the questionnaire they were criticised by their managers and were therefore no longer willing to espouse criticism citing job security.

These findings suggested that regardless of senior management’s influence or the best intentions of training initiatives, the culture of the organisation and the level of resistance to change mediated an individual’s desire and ability to transfer and apply their new learning.

7.1.1.2 Competitive work environment
Organisation D was identified as a competitive hierarchical environment of highly educated and motivated employees and was described by employees as a workforce of degree-qualified high achievers held in high regard by industry. This created an internal competitive environment where individuals were reluctant to highlight issues of personal and professional development afraid it would be seen by others as a weakness in their abilities or skills.

Management interviewees reported this reluctance as creating a barrier that limited positive progress improvements in organisational learning culture. These findings suggested an organisational learning culture that included a competitive working environment mediated an individual’s desire to express training needs and requests for personal and professional development.
Findings inferred a highly competitive working environment precluded any personal or skill development and prevented any benefits that training would have provided and therefore inhibited organisational progress.

7.1.1.3 Time constraints and work pressures

The reported findings suggested time constraints and work pressures contributed to poor attitudes toward training and a general lack of support for training initiatives. Observations of organisation A’s managers indicated a willingness to support direct reports, however offered current organisational culture and time constraints were limiting factors.

Notations of managers from organisation C suggested they and their direct reports were time poor and managers were too busy to approve the time away from work to attend training. This management view was observed by this researcher as supported by executives interviewed from organisation E. In this organisation, six of the eight managers admitted providing no support to direct reports prior to or following training courses, commenting they were too busy to provide any learning support.

It was the view of all interviewees that managing their time and workload with training created anxiety leading them to ask questions of training value versus the importance and urgency of their current workload. Interviewees cited frustration in balancing the need for training with the day-to-day organisational demands of the workplace. This researcher’s perception of organisation B, suspected workload and time constraints were reasons why prior to training there was no needs analysis performed by the L&D department. This was later articulated, during post interview discussions with employees, as to why L&D did not follow up on trainee’s learning transfer or application.

The reality or perceived reality of workload and time constraints that influenced employees’ beliefs of training value was a dominant view within organisations. The reality was that the current methods of training delivery within the five organisations required time away from work and therefore affected current workload.
Observations of interviewees from organisation A identified their difficulties in taking key people out of nationally diverse workplaces to attend centrally located face-to-face training. This suggested a need to investigate alternative methods of training delivery. Methods such as bite-sized eLearning modules or mobile apps accessible 24 hours were acknowledged by interviewees from organisation D as a practical alternative to more formal training whilst out of the office on business or secondment.

These findings indicated aligning training delivery methods to business needs and practices and to the current trends toward a more mobile workforce would reduce organisational and employee anxiety to attend, transfer and apply new learning.

7.1.1.4 Internal communication practices and relationships
This study reported regular discussions with managers both prior and post training that focussed on communicating learning and development needs improved learning transfer for both individuals and the organisation. Results suggested the concept of manager - direct report communication spanned the entire end-to-end process of organisational learning and development, influenced pre and post learning discussions, the organisational support for learning and manager follow-up.

Although interviewees suggested a more formal process as a method of improving communication between managers, individuals and peers was warranted, several employees believed regular informal discussions also provided an effective method of communication. These informal discussions built a stronger relationship with their manager and provided an open forum for discussing development needs and issues or barriers to learning transfer. Poor communication with their manager was viewed as a hindrance to personal and professional development.

An unexpected finding expressed by employees within organisation E was the notion that internal professional development courses allowed employees to meet and work with others cross-functionally. In particular, the course allowed employees to make contact with those colleagues in departments in which they would not normally have access to in their day-to-day work environment.

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These findings not only highlighted the practical importance of bridging the cross-functional - manager - direct report communication gap but also supported the growing interest in and emphasis on networking within business and suggested training was a resource for enabling internal networking.

7.1.1.5 Organisational and individual perceptions of training value
Results indicated managers within organisations perceived training as essential to improving business performance and to the improvement of the knowledge and skills of their employees. Training therefore was viewed as adding value to the bottom line and to personal and professional development. This finding offered a reason as to the reported large estimates spent on training initiatives annually (see Chapter 1).

Findings indicated where organisations did not communicate the strategic or personal importance of attending training to employees their learning motivation was low. Results indicated all five organisations supported training pre-intervention however only one out of the five organisations researched attempted limited identification of the value of their training efforts to the organisation or to individual employees.

Findings reported none of the thirty-one interviewees viewed their organisations internal learning processes or practices as including a method for measuring learning transfer or assessing the workplace application of learning. All organisations researched further reported difficulties in isolating training value, which suggested that without learning transfer measurement or learning assessment determining the value of training was difficult if not unachievable.

As discussed above, time and workload forced employees to choose between training and the pressures of work. Within organisation E, the implication of this decision reduced attendance at training as some employees interviewed perceived training as low value and therefore as wasting work time. L&D professionals interviewed added weight to this discussion and expressed a belief that their training schedules, workplace time pressures and a general lack of interest from senior management inhibited any formal follow up processes including any measurement of training success or value to the organisation. This brought into
context the importance of a positive learning culture that was supported by all levels of management.

Results indicated organisations needed to consider three things that influenced employee perceptions of training value; personal and operational considerations of training value, the type of training conducted and the value of training to the customer:

- **The direct bottom line value of training**: training initiatives were of value only if aligned to an individual's personal development, role requirements, operational requirements and the strategic objectives of the organisation. The measures of training success became apparent when managers and L&D professionals isolated training objectives prior to an intervention, selected participants on needs and requirements and identified the objectives met post training.

- **The type of training conducted**: the benefits from up-skilling staff created an indirect value for the organisation. Hard skills training, for example technical or sales training, produced measurable outcomes, however soft skills training such as leadership training did not produce such immediate and therefore measurable results.

- **The value of training to the customer**: These were benefits reflected in service levels and customer satisfaction and offered a further example of indirect value to the organisation but perhaps more measurable.

From the findings of MV1, employee perceptions of the personal value of training differed and that training altered employee perspectives of their organisation. Whilst the individual benefits training provided increased knowledge or skills, this study's findings identified further employee perceptions of training value:

- Training increased an individual’s personal and professional capabilities
- Training improved their standing within the organisation as knowledge leaders
- Training heightened their value or measure of worth to the organisation.
Added to these perspectives of individual value were comments from interviewees that training enabled career development and internal communication. Findings indicated regardless of the training course subject, design, content or outcome the opportunity training presented in communicating and networking hierarchically and cross-functionally was seen as valuable. These examples improved an individual’s values, beliefs and attitudes toward their organisation and therefore were an indirect value that may not have provided direct measureable results to the bottom line.

7.1.1.6 Effectiveness of organisational learning processes and needs analysis
MV1 findings suggested support for a training process hinged on the level of organisational assistance individuals received and in the relationship they had with their internal managers. Findings reported previously, indicated informal processes for learning and informal manager - direct report relationships were equally as important as the more formal learning practices within organisations. When implementing an organisational process for learning and development, findings reported that one should consider factors of organisational strategy, the influence of the organisation and management and the learning transfer and application processes for employees.

The further factors of personal feedback, informal learning sessions and reward for completion of training were identified as methods for improving organisational learning processes and were identified in the findings as important elements for consideration when introducing processes for training that enhanced learner motivation.

Findings suggested difficulties occurred in the identification of an employee’s training needs where individuals did not clearly articulate their personal learning needs or the organisation or managers failed to recognise areas for personal and professional development. The reported frustration with the lack of a pre-intervention needs analysis process were highlighted by employees in organisation E, who believed a detailed discussion with their manager about why they were attending the course, an outline of the course objective, and an approximate time away from work prior to training would have been valuable.
Organisation D’s L&D department had an active needs analysis process however employees were told to attend training and there was little individual support leading up to training from the L&D department or employees’ managers. This lack of support was highlighted by comments that the L&D department had reactive rather than proactive managers and no one followed up to see if or how training had been applied. Organisation B employees supported this call for learning processes as they were instructed by email to participate in training with little or no explanation as to why they are attending.

The training schedule within organisation C was observed as excessive. This view was expressed by most employees commenting training appeared to be for trainings sake or a tick-the-box style of training programing and then move on to the next training event. This highlighted a lack of processes for individual needs and learning alignment. All interviewees further commented that they would value some form of process to identify actual workplace application, believing this process would make a significant difference to the amount, type and approvals of training.

In all but one organisation (organisation D) the application of any defined learning processes were in their infancy or non-existent. This suggested that from the perspective of employees, an organisational environment that excluded learning processes reduced the transference of their learning into the workplace. Although organisation D had an effective needs analysis process, employees were frustrated with the lack of further learning processes including post training follow up. This frustration was common across all five organisations researched.

7.1.1.7 MV1 discussion summary
From the discussion above the perceptions of training value varied. Employees expressed views of increased knowledge and skills, improved their standing within the organisation and enhanced career possibilities and their perception of value or worth to the organisation. Managers’ comments agreed with these employee views, however took a more holistic view and indicated that training was essential to improving business performance and therefore manager’s viewed training as adding value to the bottom line and to the personal and professional development
of their employees. These findings offered a reason for the reported large annual estimates of expenditure on training initiatives annually (see Chapter 1).

The influence an organisational environment (MV1) had over an employee’s ability to transfer their learning has been identified. From this influence themes emerged, which when combined with the researchers’ observation notes, provided a rich description of employee beliefs and experiences of their organisation’s learning transfer practices:

- Organisational seniority influenced an employee’s commitment to training and the transfer and application of new learning both positively and negatively. Findings further suggested that regardless of senior management’s influence or the best intentions of training initiatives, the culture of the organisation and the level of resistance to change mediated an employee’s desire and ability to transfer and apply their new learning.

- A highly competitive working environment reduced employee openness to request training, inhibited personal development or skills, prevented any benefits that training would have provided and therefore constrained organisational progress.

- Balancing time constraints and workload with training created employee anxiety leading them to question the value and benefits of training versus the importance and urgency of completing their current workload. Time constraints and work pressures contributed to poor attitudes toward training and the general lack of support for training initiatives by both managers and their direct reports. Aligning training delivery methods to business needs and practices and to the current trends toward a more mobile workforce would reduce employee anxiety to attend, transfer and apply new learning.

- A positive learning culture that was supported and communicated by all levels of management reduced resistance to organisational change and brought into context the importance of bridging the organisational - manager - direct report communication gap.
When developing training, organisations needed to consider six factors that influenced organisational and employee perceptions of training value. They were personal and operational considerations, the type of training conducted, the value of training to the customer, how training increased an individual’s personal and professional capabilities, training improved employees standing within the organisation as knowledge leaders and highlighted ways training enhanced employee value or measure of worth to the organisation. Addressing these factors improved an individual’s values, beliefs, motivation and attitudes toward training and to their organisation.

In four out of the five organisations, well-defined learning processes were in their infancy or non-existent. Employee frustration with training was high in these four organisations with the lack of needs analysis, identified learning objectives, communication and learning assessment as defined learning processes. Clearly identified was the concept that an organisation’s learning environment that excluded learning processes reduced the transference of learning into the workplace.

These reported organisational environmental factors (the influence of the senior leadership team, the level of competitiveness, time constraints and work pressures, poor internal communication practices, low perceptions and difficulties organisations encountered in isolating actual training value and the lack of internal processes for learning) provided reasons, in part, for reports in literature and within the training industry on low estimates of effective or positive learning transfer (see Chapter 1).

Senior management’s influence over training and development at organisation D was observed by the researcher as significantly different to the level of accountability expected of CEO’s in other organisations researched. This senior level accountability was viewed by all employees as positive, however lower levels of management were resistant to change and reverted to old pre training behaviours following training. This created an unsupportive learning environment for employees in their efforts to transfer and apply new learning and suggest...
ownership, accountability and positive support for training was important. These issues will now be discussed.

### 7.1.2 Discussion: Organisational stakeholders – MV2

Similar to the discussion outlined above, themes emerged from the analysis of MV2 interview data. This researcher’s observation notes were analysed with selected entries chosen supporting the research results and emergent themes. These results, themes and notes developed the following areas for discussion.

Findings identified gaps within all levels of management in their ownership of learning, accountability for learning and in providing support to their direct report’s learning transfer and application. Employees viewed the accountability of stakeholders as low and largely failed to assist in the implementation of an individual’s new learning. Emerging for the data on the organisational stakeholders, MV2 identified four influential factors that mediated learning transfer within organisations:

- Stakeholder ownership and accountability for learning
- Support and follow up from senior management, L&D and managers
- Self-initiated learning transfer and the support of teams and peers
- Coaching and mentoring.

These emergent themes arising are now discussed.

#### 7.1.2.1 Stakeholder ownership and accountability for learning

Findings indicated the accountability of an employee’s stakeholders, for example their manager, the organisation or the organisations learning and development professionals was low and generally failed to assist in the implementation of an individual’s new learning.

Whilst ownership of learning and accountability for learning was reported as low, the experiences of ten percent of employees interviewed differed. Within organisation E it was noted that two individuals believed that they had maintained motivation pre and post training as a result of their manager’s high accountability for their learning and both benefited from the support, coaching and follow up that
their managers provided. A further interviewee from organisation B mentioned attending the same training as her manager had heightened motivation. Prior to the training event her manager was disinterested and unsupportive thinking the training was an interruption to their day-to-day workflow, however post training both were motivated to apply what they had learnt. The result of this increased ownership of and accountability for the learning was that her manager became supportive and mentored and coached her direct report to effectively transfer and apply the new learning.

These findings promoted stakeholder ownership and accountability of learning as a tool for improved learning transfer, which provided increased learning value, the achievement of personal and organisational learning objectives, outcomes and goals and therefore enabled positive organisational momentum.

7.1.2.2 Support and follow up from senior management, L&D, and managers
Stakeholder ownership and accountability for learning as outlined above benefited the organisation, management and employees. This was demonstrated in MV1 results that indicated without a positive learning culture or a strong direction and influence from the organisation, the outcome was a lack of commitment to training. MV1 highlighted senior management as influential across all areas of training, for example leading up to training, when attending training and when attempting to apply new workplace learning.

Management interviewees from organisation C demonstrated this reported less than positive learning culture. The researcher observed the reluctance by executives to provide learning support for their direct reports. As managers, they had not been required by the organisation to follow up, mentor or coach direct reports following training, as it was not a criterion for their personal performance reviews. Interviewees were critical of their organisation’s poor attitude toward supporting their application of learning. The lack of follow up by L&D or managers post training and no ongoing support to identify if a behaviour change or effective application of learning had occurred were cited as reasons for this criticism.

The issue of low manager support both pre and post training was a factor that all interviewees highlighted within organisation A. Employees remarked that they
were expected to implement and apply training without direct or indirect support from managers or the L&D department. Employees viewed L&D as producing tick-the-box training and as providing little or no support for learning transfer or follow up of training application.

Organisation B’s employees also noted concerns that no manager support or follow up was provided prior to or following training. One interviewee however, a manager himself, commented that this lack of a supportive learning culture within his organisation was the result of perceptions that discussing learning needs may be interpreted by others as a manager’s weakness or as represented a lack of managerial skills.

Findings from this study suggested the lack of learning follow up reduced training effectiveness and recommended individuals, managers and the organisation would benefit from a process of post-learning support and follow up. Observations from employees from organisation D endorsed this recommendation by suggesting L&D professionals and managers should be require to provide a follow up process or a guide to assist managers with pre training needs analysis and post learning transfer and application conversations.

A proactive manager approach to learning support and follow up was therefore preferential. Line managers that defined what new learning was most applicable to the workplace improved an individual’s confidence and motivation to apply learnt knowledge and or skills correctly. With no follow up processes in place, stakeholders were unaware of what learning was being transferred.

Senior management, L&D professionals and managers therefore provided influence over learning transfer processes through both their actions and inactions and were influential stakeholders that enabled or limited an individual’s ability to transfer workplace learning.

7.1.2.3  Self-initiated learning transfer and the support of teams and peers
This study’s results reported low support and follow up from L&D and learner’s managers, as discussed above, however this allowed individuals to decide how and what parts of their training they thought should be applied into their workplace.
The result of this lack of support pre and post learning or any follow up of learning left individuals to self-initiate learning transfer independently.

Observation from organisation E noted many felt that there was little or no follow up of how they might apply their new skills and knowledge or even if they were actually applying it, instead individuals were left to decide on their own what was important or appropriate to apply from their training. Notes on organisation C supported this concept and suggested although some interviewees agreed they had team and peer support, most felt left on their own to apply new learning.

Caffarella (2001) in his five influencing intrinsic and extrinsic factors for successful learning transfer did not discuss what options were available for individuals should organisational learning support be unavailable (see Chapter 2). In the absence of organisational or manager support for their training, findings indicated interviewees reverted to horizontal support and accountability therefore relying on themselves, their team and peers for ongoing support in transferring and applying their learning.

This suggested an individual’s ability to self-initiate learning transfer was influenced by the level of support and follow up from their manager, the internal L&D professionals and the current organisational learning processes.

Identifying and if necessary improving the current level of organisational and managerial support for learning was crucial for effective learning transfer. Findings suggested the accuracy of learning transfer and application as a result of self-initiated, team and peer that supported learning transfer was unpredictable and therefore questionable. When initiating or implementing a supportive workplace learning environment and positive processes for learning the identification and influence of team and peer support were important factors for consideration that enabled learning transfer.

7.1.2.4 Coaching and mentoring
Observations of organisation B noted there was no coaching or mentoring of employees by their managers. It was reported, managers in this organisation expressed the importance and value of training, however provided no ongoing support for their direct report’s learning transfer or application citing factors of
workload and time constraints, issues identified above. Middle level managers within organisation D further suggested that they would improve their approach to and support of learning transfer, for example through supportive function such as coaching and mentoring staff, only if directed to do so. This proposed that with senior management’s directive and with learning processes in place for coaching or mentoring, managers would be compelled to support their direct reports learning transfer.

Examples of positive coaching and mentoring practices were identified within organisation D’s senior leadership team and within organisation E. This researcher’s observations of organisation D identified that each of the senior executive team members interviewed was appointed an external business coach during a recent leadership course. Valuing the coach’s guidance, each member of the senior leadership team retained these individual coaches even though the course had completed more than six months prior. Each of the senior leadership team members suggested the coaching process was of ongoing worth to them and the organisation. Organisation E’s process of selecting internal subject matter experts as specialist training course coaches was observed as having a positive influence on training participants however upon returning to the workplace participants reported limited or no coaching and mentoring from their managers.

Study findings indicated there was a commitment needed by both a manager and their direct reports to enable a process of coaching and mentoring. Assigning an external or internal coach and mentor as the go-to person pre, during and post training increased internal communication practices, reduced the reliance and time constraints on managers, enhanced employee motivation (and therefore performance) and assisted learners to consolidate understanding, transfer and the application of their workplace learning. This highlighted the value and importance of a coaching and mentoring process to employees and to the organisation.

7.1.2.5 MV2 discussion summary
Selected researcher’s observation notes of interviewee characteristics and impressions of events during the data collection process have been discussed. These notes provided a secondary source of data. A summary of discussion results
and emergent themes identified the influence organisational stakeholders (MV2) had over an employee’s ability to transfer and apply their learning, which are outlined below:

- **Stakeholder ownership of and accountability for learning** were tools for improving learning transfer and provided increased individual and organisational learning value and therefore organisational momentum.

- **A proactive manager approach** to learning support and follow up improved an individual’s confidence and motivation to apply learnt knowledge and/or skills correctly. With no follow up processes in place, stakeholders were unaware of what learning was being transferred.

- **Senior management, L&D professionals and managers** provided influence over learning transfer processes through both actions and inactions and were identified as influential stakeholders that enabled or limited an individual’s ability to transfer workplace learning.

- **Identification of the current level of organisational and managerial support** for learning was crucial to ensure effective learning transfer. The accuracy of learning transfer and application as a result of self-initiated, team and peer supported learning transfer was unpredictable and therefore questionable. When initiating or implementing a supportive workplace learning environment and positive processes for learning the identification and influence of team and peer support were important factors for consideration that enabled learning transfer.

- **A commitment was needed by both a manager and their direct reports to enable a process of coaching and mentoring.** Assigning an external or internal coach and mentor as the go-to person pre, during and post training increased internal communication practices, reduced the reliance and time constraints on managers, enhanced employee motivation (and therefore performance) and assisted learners to consolidate understanding, transfer and apply their workplace learning. This highlighted the value and
importance of a coaching and mentoring process to employees and to the organisation.

MV2 results identified several key factors that influenced learning transfer. Ownership of and accountability for learning were tools and methods for improving learning transfer. With no learning support or follow up processes in place, influential stakeholders were unaware of what learning was being transferred. Influential stakeholders further enabled or limited an individual’s ability to transfer workplace learning. Organisational and managerial support for learning was crucial for effective learning transfer and the value and importance of a coaching and mentoring process contributed, in part, to an answer for the reports in literature and within the training industry of the estimated low learning transfer rates (see Chapter 1).

Resultant themes presented above supported the influence of organisational stakeholders as a barrier to or enabler of learning transfer and therefore supported moderating variable 2 (MV2) and its variable factors as this study’s research instrument’s second moderating variable.

Results indicated the actions of organisations and managers enabled or limited an individual’s ability to transfer their learning. Whilst positive actions allowed effective learning transfer, limiting actions restricted the learning transfer process. This suggested a less than positive learning transfer climate created a barrier to the workplace application of learning. These actions are now discussed.

7.1.3 Discussion: Organisational actions – MV3
The discussion of MV3 results included emergent themes from the analysis of interview data. The researchers’ observation notes were analysed and selected entries chosen in support of these emergent themes. The themes and notes developed the following discussion.

Within Chapter 4, 5 and 6 four employee motivators for training were identified; personal career development, perceptions of training value, expectation of personal reward and attending training that facilitated internal communication. These factors were reported as positive self-motivators that enabled an employee
to transfer and apply their new learning and supported communication hierarchically and cross-functionally. This discussion draws them into context with the influencing actions of the organisation and managers. Where employee motivation was low, these personal motivators were found to be influenced by the actions of the organisation and managers therefore limited learning transfer. The discussion below centres on these actions and identified from the findings ways employees dealt with and overcame them.

Organisational actions were found to mediate an individual’s motivation toward learning transfer intentions and further influenced managerial actions. These organisational and managerial actions therefore influenced an employee’s actions and affected the relationship between perceived behavioural control and actual behavioural control that allowed individual learners to transfer and apply their workplace learning. Four factors influencing learning transfer emerged from the data for discussion:

- Organisational and managerial actions mediated a learner’s motivation
- Self-motivation, perceived behavioural control, actual behavioural control
- Actions of the organisation and managers form the learning transfer climate
- Support and guidance from team members and peers.

These emergent themes arising are now discussed.

7.1.3.1 Organisational and managerial actions mediated a learner’s motivation

MV3 findings offered that motivation enhanced the act of doing and the level of control a learner possessed in transferring and applying their new workplace learning. In the absence of a positive learning transfer climate where organisations or managers failed to provide adequate learning support, high learner motivation self-initiated and facilitated learning transfer, however what was being transferred was unpredictable and therefore questionable.

Results indicated the actions of the organisation and managers influenced an individual’s motivation and therefore mediated a learner’s ability to transfer learning. Observations of interviewees within organisation E noted, regardless of
the training environment, employees believed that a higher level of manager support pre and post training had assisted them with their motivation to appropriately transfer and apply their new workplace learning.

Results indicated this support was low within organisations and managers failed to communicate the strategic or personal importance of attending the training intervention to employees, which therefore influenced an employee’s learning motivation. Interviewees further expressed a need for this support and or reassurance on how or what to apply following training. As discussed in MV2, the researcher noted two employees within organisation E had suggested the actions of their managers in support of their learning was positive and believed other employees less supported by their managers experienced lower motivation. This low learning support had resulted in reduced attitudes towards learning and learning value. Both mentioned their peers would have benefited from higher level of support from their managers.

These organisational actions or inactions resulted in a lack of motivation on the part of each interviewee to participate in training or have the willingness to apply their new learning. The researcher noted that in organisation A interviewees’ perceived training was pushed from their head office with little regard for coalface needs, which further reduced their motivation to attend or apply new learning. Organisational actions at organisation A further influenced individuals with observations leadership development programs were only made available to head office staff, which de-motivated outer suburban, regional and interstate managers. This corresponded with MV1’s discussion on the importance of aligning training to both the needs of the learner and the objectives of the organisation.

The actions of several organisations created an environment of apprehension and disinterest in training for many of the interviewees. Within organisation B employees were told they had been individually selected, singled out as potential future leaders, to participate in professional development courses. Upon attending the training however, it became clear that in some cases entire state departments were attending which reduced the perceived value of their selection and their motivation. Results identified positive self-motivation as a key factor that enabled
a learner to independently transfer and apply new learning where personal career development and perceptions of value and reward were evident.

MV2 discussed that when a manager was engaged with the learning and was accountable for the learning enhanced motivation of employees to transfer learning occurred. Results further found that the opposite also occurred where disengagement and the lack of accountability, support and follow up from managers reduced learning transfer. Findings highlighted the lack of organisational and managerial actions in assisting a learner's application of learning created a barrier to learning transfer.

Results from MV1 further suggested an individual's perception of their work environment and culture were factors that mediated their learning transfer. The actions of the organisation and managers influenced these perceptions and enabled or limited personal motivation to accept behaviour change and their attitudes toward the organisation. Improved employee perceptions of learning value and positive organisational and managerial actions in support of learning transfer therefore increased an individual's motivation to transfer and apply learning appropriately.

In the following discussion findings suggested regardless of the actions of managers or the organisation, learners transferred their learning into the workplace independently where motivation to do so was high.

7.1.3.2 Self-motivation, perceived behavioural control, actual behavioural control
Results agreed with Ajzen's (1991) term ‘intention viability’, which was the idea that the realisation of intentions as a result of an individual’s perceived behavioural control was likely to occur only if the person possessed actual control over the behaviour change. Findings indicated self-confidence, personal ability and manager permission to apply their new learning into the workplace transformed perceived behavioural control of new learning into actual behavioural control and enabled workplace application.

Results extended Ajzen's view however and pointed out if a learner's motivation to transfer and apply learning was high, then notwithstanding organisational actions or the actions of their manager, learners self-initiated learning transfer
independently. This further suggested self-initiated learning transfer occurred out of necessity where organisational or managerial support for learning transfer was low. Self-motivation therefore strengthened perceived behavioural control and was a factor that influenced a learner’s actual behavioural control to enable transfer and application of new workplace learning independently.

MV3 findings indicated that high self-motivation led to self-initiated learning transfer and that high self-motivation strengthened an individual’s perceived behavioural control to facilitate actual behavioural control, which suggested actual behavioural control was not influenced solely by extrinsic factors.

One explanation for low organisational or managerial support that resulted in the reported self-initiated learning transfer was as a result of seniority or position within the organisation. This suggested the opposite also occurred and that the organisation and managers needed to take the initiative to offer, encourage and support training participation at less senior levels. Results indicated that this was not the case and that low support for training spans the breadth of all hierarchical levels within organisations.

Self-initiated learning transfer however emerged as an unexpected finding from the research data. Twenty-eight of the thirty-one employees interviewed (ninety percent) experienced low learning support from their organisation or their managers. Of the ten percent that were supported, all transferred and applied their learning effectively. Interviewees suggested that with limited or no involvement from their organisation or support from their managers they independently transferred and applied their own learning. Findings reported this self-initiated learning transfer and application of learning was common within organisations. All organisations reported concerns that self-initiated learning transfer and independent application of learning resulted in variable training outcomes and therefore inconsistent organisational benefits. These findings suggested a relationship between the level of personal motivation, the level of organisational and managerial support for learning and employee perceptions that self-initiated learning transfer was needed and warranted.
7.1.3.3 **Actions of the organisation and managers form the learning transfer climate**

It was clear from MV1 findings that only one organisation researched, organisation D, had a positive pre-training processes for learning, however MV3 findings determined that with limited post-learning processes in place learning transfer was constrained and the effectiveness of their learning transfer climate was questionable.

A positive post-learning transfer climate was observed within two organisations. Of the eight employees interviewed within organisation E, two employees mentioned their manager’s interest and actions in providing learning support through coaching, mentoring and follow up. This had directly influenced the employee's learning transfer and learning application, which produced a positive outcome for them from training. They felt empowered by their manager’s approach, which had encouraged them to effectively transfer and apply their new learning. A similar experience was expressed in the findings from one of the seven employees interviewed from organisation B.

Results suggested the learning transfer climate was a process that included three factors; the alignment of learning, stakeholder ownership and accountability and organisational and manager support:

- The alignment of learning to personal and professional needs, together with open communication between managers and their direct reports and the identification of explicit organisational objectives (as outlined in Chapter 4 - MV1)

- Stakeholder ownership of and accountability for learning within a supportive manager environment (discussed in Chapter 5 - MV2)

- Promoting high individual motivation, providing supportive organisational and managerial actions and methods for measured but urgent learning application (expressed in Chapter 6 - MV3).

Results and observations of the five organisations researched, organisation D was closest to achieving a positive learning transfer climate approach. As reported in the findings, support for training within organisation D was driven from the CEO
and the senior leadership team down. During discussions with the contact person from this organisation, their learning process commenced with a senior leadership team meeting to decide on the organisation’s strategic direction followed by monthly meetings to evaluate progress. Personal and professional training were considered crucial links in achieving the organisations identified strategic outcomes, therefore L&D was invited to participate in these meetings and to report on progress. This process provided organisation D with a well-defined and aligned training needs requirement that when combined with an analysis of departmental and employee personal and professional needs, created an aligned training needs regime.

Whilst organisation D had embraced and applied these initiatives successfully, the findings from this study highlighted several issues: firstly, training had introduced cultural change which created employee resistance and a return by some managers to old behaviours; secondly, the training schedule and the mandatory requirement to attend training impacted current workload, created frustration, and caused employee’s to question the value of training versus time away from work equation; and thirdly, the organisation was struggling with the assessment of accurate learning outcomes due to the lack of learning support in the form of coaching, mentoring, follow up or the identification of effective learning transfer.

The effectiveness of organisation D’s learning processes prior to training identified a positive approach to the development of a successful learning transfer climate. Within organisations B and E, although representing only three of the thirty-one employees interviewed in this study (ten percent), support was offered for the effectiveness of a post learning process where their managers provided learning support, coaching, mentoring and follow up to their direct reports, which assisted in creating their positive post-learning transfer climate.

7.1.3.4 Support and guidance from team members and peers
Discussed in MV2, the use of team and peer support was a viable approach that enabled learning transfer. In a further finding employees noted that in the absence of organisational or management learning transfer assistance, not only did they attempt self-initiated learning transfer, they sought the assistance, support and
guidance from team members, co-workers and peers in an effort to transfer and apply new workplace learning appropriately. The actions of teams and peers provided this guidance by adding a collaborative voice to facilitate appropriate learning transfer and the application of new learning.

Findings indicated many employees were uneasy about transferring some elements of training and within an unsupportive learning environment were less motivated to apply their new learning. The perceived safety of this team or peer collaborative voice increased learner motivation to transfer their new learning and strengthened learning application as a group with less concern arising from an unsupportive and reactive approach from the organisation or their manager.

Findings indicated therefore the actions or inactions of the organisation or managers enabled team, co-worker and peer support mechanisms to emerge as employee motivation to confidently and appropriately transfer and apply their new workplace learning.

7.1.3.5 MV3 discussion summary
A summary of discussion results and emergent themes identified the influence organisational actions (MV3) had over an employee’s ability to transfer their learning. The researcher’s observation notes were included with selected entries chosen supporting the emergent themes:

- The lack of organisational and managerial actions in assisting an employee’s application of learning created a barrier to learning transfer, however the introduction of effective organisational learning processes both pre and post training created a positive learning transfer climate. Identifying the level of personal motivation, organisational and managerial support for learning and employee perceptions of learning transfer was warranted for effective learning transfer

- Actions of the organisation and managers influenced employee perceptions of training and enabled or limited personal motivation to accept behaviour change. Improved employee perceptions of learning value and positive organisational and managerial actions in support of learning transfer
therefore increased an individual's motivation to transfer and apply learning appropriately

- Self-motivation strengthened perceived behavioural control and was an important factor that influenced a learner's actual behavioural control. If a learner's motivation to transfer and apply learning was high, then notwithstanding organisational actions or the actions of their manager, learners self-initiated learning transfer independently. This further suggested self-initiated learning transfer occurred out of necessity where organisational or managerial support for learning transfer was low.

- Self-initiated learning transfer and application of learning was common within organisations. Ninety percent of employees interviewed experienced low learning support from their organisation or their manager. Of this group, they either applied their learning independently, sought team and peer support to apply their learning, or chose not to apply the learning. Of the ten percent that were supported all transferred and applied their learning effectively. Self-initiated learning transfer and independent application of learning however resulted in inconsistent training outcomes and therefore questionable organisational benefits.

These reported organisational actions identified four factors influencing learning transfer and provided reasons, in part, for the reported literature and within the training industry on low learning transfer rates achieved (see Chapter 1):

- The lack of organisational and managerial actions created a barrier to learning transfer however effective organisational learning processes both pre and post training created a positive learning transfer climate and identifying personal motivation, organisational and managerial support and employee perceptions of learning was warranted.

- The actions of the organisation and managers enabled or limited personal motivation.

- Self-motivation strengthened perceived behavioural control and highly motivated learners self-initiated learning transfer independently.
Self-initiated learning transfer and independent application of learning resulted in variable training outcomes.

These discussions on emergent themes from the analysis of data through the lenses of the organisational environment (MV1), organisational stakeholders (MV2) and organisational actions (MV3) highlighted several interconnecting associations and cohesive interrelationships. The final step of an activity system analysis assessed how its components influence each other and to identify interrelationships (Pircher, Zenk & Risku 2008). These connections have been graphically depicted by the two-way arrows intersecting the research instrument variables (see Chapter 3, figure 3.11). Results have identified these interrelationships between moderating variables MV1, MV2 and MV3 and form, in part, this study's conclusions presented further in this chapter.

These moderating variable interrelations promoted the adapted activity system analytical framework as a suitable framework or diagnostic for the investigation of barriers to learning transfer within organisations. The research instrument’s suitability to investigation learning transfer within organisations is discussed below. Research conclusions and contributions to practice and knowledge will now be outlined.

### 7.2 Research conclusions

An exploration of barriers to learning transfer has been conducted. Overarching barriers to learning transfer were drawn into this study's three moderating variables MV1, MV2 and MV3, which were supported by literature and adapted into an activity system analytical framework as the research instrument. The analysis of data and research results were divided into three chapters, Chapter 4 - MV1, Chapter 5 - MV2 and Chapter 6 - MV3.

The themes that emerged from the data provided areas for discussion as outlined previously in this chapter and allowed conclusions to be drawn. The research conclusions have provided a contribution to practice and several contributions to knowledge and are now presented.
7.2.1 Contribution to practice

This study reported on providing methods and practices for managers and employees to act upon when attempting to improve organisational learning transfer. Organisations must concern themselves with the learning process, the workplace environment as a learning context and the application by learners of new knowledge and skills gained through learning activities (Taylor, Russ-Eft & Chan 2005). This research investigated organisational learning practices from three perspectives: within the context of an organisational learning environment, the influence of an employee's learning stakeholders and the actions of organisational stakeholders.

This study's findings identified both positive and negative practices organisations engaged in that enabled or limited an employee's learning transfer. These practices are discussed below, however this research extends these emergent results and presents the reader with a recommendation for an effective organisational learning process. For this organisational learning process to produce a positive learning transfer climate, this study's three moderating variables (organisational environment - MV1, organisational stakeholders - MV2 and organisational actions - MV3) should be considered. The recommended organisational learning process provides a contribution to practice and is discussed further in this section.

Prior to the presentation of this recommendation, it is relevant to outline emergent study issues that need to be addressed prior to implementing an organisational learning process. Negative and positive learning transfer practices have been identified in this research, which formed the basis of the learning transfer climate within each of the five organisations interviewed. This study identified commonality between these diverse organisations in dealing with the issue of learning transfer and that the influence of negative or positive learning transfer practices enables or limits an employee's learning transfer. Drawn from the research results and subsequent discussion above, four negative and four positive implications emerged for organisations to consider when investigating issues of learning transfer or when implementing an organisational learning process. These conclusions are now discussed followed by this study's recommendation.
7.2.1.1 Lack of ownership, accountability and support for training
This research identified issues and difficulties that organisations faced in attempting to improve their embedded learning culture. A lack of organisational ownership, accountability and support for learning emerged from the data. Ninety percent of managers failed to provide learning support to their direct reports. The lack of stakeholder ownership and accountability identified that a manager’s commitment to training and their perceptions of the value of training resulted in low organisational and managerial support of learning. Where organisational and managerial support of learning was low, an individual’s perception of training value was also low, which reduced a learner’s motivation and therefore their commitment to training. This created a negative learning transfer climate.

7.2.1.2 Balancing training with time constraints and work pressures
An employee’s ability to balance their current workload with time away from work to attend training generated employee and management anxiety and frustration. This led to an employee’s negative judgments of the training value and to a lack of support from their manager for effective learning transfer and application.

7.2.1.3 Poor organisational support and processes for learning prior to training
Organisational processes prior to training were non-existent in all but one organisation. Results indicated managers were not required or instructed to provide learning support for their staff. L&D professionals cited time constraints, workload, maintaining the training schedule and a lack of interest from senior management as reasons for the lack of implementation of pre-training processes. Low manager and L&D accountability for learning initiatives together with low learner support reduced employee motivation to attend, transfer and apply new learning.

7.2.1.4 Poor organisational support and processes for learning post training
Ninety percent of interviewees reported learning support and post-training processes were non-existent within all five organisations. Organisations and managers failed to provide learning follow up, coaching, mentoring or support to employees following training and in employee efforts to transfer and apply new learning.
Findings suggested this lack of pre- and post-learning support was a result of limited or no learning processes in place and any requirement for managers to take ownership of or accountability for learning within their organisations.

7.2.1.5 Value of support from the senior leadership team
When the senior leadership team reinforced the value of training to the organisation this improved the perception of training to employees and that the new learning was important. Communicating the importance of training by senior leaders increased the support for organisational learning and heightened the awareness that training was aligned to strategic objectives.

7.2.1.6 Implications of positive manager accountability and support for learning
Results indicated if an employee’s manager attended the same training or was more aware of and accountable for the training content, the resistance to change reduced and the support for an employee’s learning and application increased. These findings related manager ownership and accountability for learning with an employee’s actual behavioural control, which improved an employee’s ability to transfer and apply new learning.

7.2.1.7 Value of peer and team support where manager support was low
As noted above the lack of ownership, accountability and support from the organisation and managers for an employee’s learning, together with limited or no learning processes, reduced the effectiveness of the organisations learning transfer climate. Despite this low learning support, employees sought assistance from teams, co-workers and peers, which enabled a collective application approach and a viable alternative to the transfer and application of their learning. The perceived safety of this team or peer collaborative voice increased learner motivation to transfer their new learning and strengthened learning application as a group with less concern arising from an unsupportive and or reactive approach from the organisation or their manager.

7.2.1.8 High employee motivation creates self-initiated learning transfer
Where learner motivation to transfer and apply learning was high, employee had independently self-initiated learning transfer. The lack of organisational or managerial support reported in the data created an environment where employees were left to self-initiate their own learning transfer. Leaving employees to decide
what was appropriate to transfer and apply into their workplace suggested ad hoc learning outcomes from training and therefore made the evaluation and assessment of training problematic.

7.2.1.9 Recommended organisational learning process
The fourteen learning transfer themes that emerged from the analysis of MV1, MV2 and MV3 data, as provided in the discussion above, suggested barriers to organisational learning transfer. Improving learning processes within organisations requires the creative destruction of barriers to learning transfer (Starkey 1996). The research results identified methods and practices organisations and managers can use to explore contextual learning transfer issues to improve learning transfer within their organisation.

This study’s exploration of factors that influenced organisational learning transfer suggested the introduction or extension and implementation of a well-defined organisational learning process was essential. Implementation of an organisational learning process would provide an effective platform or benchmark for a positive learning transfer climate.

This study’s results therefore recommended that for an organisational learning process to be implemented effectively and for that process to produce a positive learning transfer climate, this research’s three moderating variables (MV1, MV2 and MV3) should be considered. Each of the moderating variables identified recommended areas for attention and action:

- Organisational environment: The alignment of learning to personal and professional needs, an open communication between managers and their direct reports, the articulation of training value to individuals and to the organisation and the identification of explicit and aligned organisational objectives

- Organisational stakeholders: The stakeholder ownership of and accountability for learning within a supportive manager/employee environment, which provided employees with learning support, follow up and coaching would assist in effectively improving learning transfer
Organisational actions: The development of processes that improved employee learning motivation, positive organisational and managerial actions that supported and assisted employees to effectively transfer their learning and enabled practices that led to the successful implementation and application of new learning.

The structure of this organisational learning process, as identified in this study’s adapted activity system analytical framework, acknowledges the importance of this study’s three moderating variables (MV1, MV2 and MV3) as factors that enable researchers, learning and development professionals and managers to identify appropriate questions to consider when investigating issues of learning transfer within organisations.

This research concluded that ten percent of employees transferred their learning positively due to a positive organisational learning process. This suggests that by identifying and addressing the factors within this study's three moderating variables will positively enable an employee’s learning transfer and would improve the effective application of their organisational learning.

This study recommends that the implementation of a structured organisational learning process that addresses the organisational environment, organisational stakeholders and organisational actions creates a positive learning transfer climate and therefore increases an organisation’s competitive advantage through learning, learning transfer and the effective application of learning.

7.2.2 Contribution to knowledge
Contributions to knowledge from this research were identified in six research results. The first three provided a response to this study's three research objectives followed by a further three emergent research contributions to knowledge:

- Organisational barriers to learning transfer (first research objective): The list of organisational barriers to learning transfer may be non-exhaustive

- Suitable research design framework and simplified diagnostic (second research objective): The adapted activity system analytical framework was
a suitable methodology and simplified diagnostic for exploring learning transfer within organisations

- High annual training expenditure versus low learning transfer rates (third research objective): Reasons were provided, in part, for the current high estimated amounts spent on training annually and why this large amount produced such low learning transfer results

- Diverse industry environments: Diverse industry environments and different organisational management structures were not limiting or enabling learning transfer factors

- A one-process-fits-all approach for accountability: A one-process-fits-all approach to organisational learning accountability was possible

- Manager's ownership, accountability, support and coaching of learning: Implementation of these factors could result in effective learning transfer.

7.2.2.1 Organisational barriers to learning transfer
The literature on learning transfer barriers, outlined in chapter 2, has been presented. Organisations needed to identify, recognise and work with barriers to organisational learning in order to release the energy vital in unlocking workplace learning and the potential benefits learning produces (Goold 2006). This study identified further organisational barriers and suggested this list of barriers may be non-exhaustive.

Regardless of the number of potential barriers, findings suggested addressing the overarching factors of organisational environment (MV1), organisational stakeholders (MV2) and organisational actions (MV3) led to high impact improvements in the ability of organisational learners to transfer and apply their new workplace learning. The research results therefore offer that the adapted activity system analytical framework's factors within each of the three overarching moderating variables (MV1, MV2 and MV3) provide a positive reply to the question from Chapter 2: Is it possible that a mere handful of those numerous learning transfer influences are able to, by themselves, make a large impact on improving low transfer rates (Burke & Saks 2009). Results therefore supported this
research’s three factors MV1, MV2 and MV3 as providing large impact and overarching influence when exploring learning transfer issues within organisations. This conclusion provides an answer to this study’s first research objective of exploring overarching learning transfer barriers as high impact factors influencing learning transfer.

This research further contributed to knowledge by combining and aligning Steiner’s (1998) three barriers to learning transfer with Goold’s (2006) ten barriers to develop this study’s three moderating variables. These three moderating variables were adapted to this study’s activity system analytical framework as a research instrument. Further support from literature for adapting this study’s moderating variables was provided by four learning transfer authors, Baldwin and Ford (1988), Pfeffer (1997), Caffarella (2001) and Taylor, Russ-Eft and Chan (2005). Each of these authors identified learning transfer barriers that bore influence over organisational learning transfer together with Steiner’s three barriers and Goold’s ten barriers provided this study’s guidance on influential mini-scale factors within this study’s MV1, MV2 and MV3 for investigation (see figure 3.5 and 3.11).

7.2.2.2 Suitable research design framework and simplified diagnostic
Adapting an activity system analytical framework to this study’s research design provided insights into and methods for exploring factors that influenced learning transfer within organisations. An activity system provides an appropriate framework for analysing learning needs, tasks and outcomes within organisations (Pircher, Zenk & Risku 2008). By realigning the activity system framework factors of rules as this study’s organisational environment (MV1), community as this study’s organisational stakeholders (MV2) and division of labour as this study’s organisational actions (MV3), the adapted activity system analytical framework provided a research instrument or diagnostic for investigating learning transfer within organisations.

An activity system built on activity theory recognised two basic processes that operated continuously at every level of human activity, internalisation and externalisation (Engestrom 1987). The internal tensions or contradictions of such
a system are the motives for change and development (Leont'ev 1978) that
highlighted organisational barriers (Goold 2006).

The adapted activity system analytical framework enabled this research to explore
issues of and barriers to learning transfer via the internal activities within multiple
organisations whilst investigating the intrinsic and extrinsic influences of these
activities upon individuals.

The interpretation, interrogation and mapping of an activity system analytical
framework included the selection process of a suitable diagnostic that enabled the
investigation of moderating variables, which influenced learning transfer.
Informing and guiding this study's research design process was Mwanza's (2002)
8-step notational and interview question forming structure. This was an approach
that could be used for developing a naturalistic inquiry by structuring the
development of interview questions and as a process or guide for data analysis
(Mwanza 2002). It was therefore possible for researchers to use activity theory to
formulate research questions that directly informed choices made prior to and
during data collection (Whitefield 2004). Mwanza (2002) developed these
processes for early phase activity system design where each of the activity system
analytical framework variables played a role in identifying the direction, language
and situated contradictions.

This research extended Mwanza's 8-step model, which was adapted in context to
this research for the identification of eighteen semi-structured interview questions
into an aligned notational structure and a nine step question development process
(see tables 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9). Each of the nine steps allowed questions to be
formulated about factors influencing learning transfer, enabled knowledge to be
acquired in relation to the situation being examined and populated the research
instrument. The use of an activity system analytical framework informed by the
nine-step question development structure provided an appropriate research
design for the collection and analysis of learning transfer data.

This study's adapted activity system analytical framework provided structure and
process for the alignment of this study's research design and provided an
organisational research guide and diagnostic designed to explore and identify the
effectiveness of learning transfer within organisations. This study’s research instrument tested a new area of research application for an activity system analytical framework. This new application, therefore provided what Holton et al. (1997) and Devos, Dumay et al. (2007) recommended, that instead of using the learning transfer system inventory (LTSI) in its entirety, a simplified diagnostic for investigating learning transfer could help organisations identify dimensions of the workplace that affected the use of learned knowledge and skills. Holton et al. and Devos, Dumay et al. believed a shortened version of the LTSI questionnaire that considered mini-scales for the investigation of effects between learning transfer constructs offered an equally complete conceptual framework for investigating organisational and training effectiveness. This study's three moderating variables MV1, MV2 and MV3 provided these mini-scales and identified interrelationships within an activity system for investigating organisational and training effectiveness.

An adapted activity system analytical framework has been offered as a research framework that explored factors influencing learning transfer within organisations and for identifying dimensions of the workplace that affected the use and implementation of learned knowledge and skills. The adapted activity system analytical framework therefore has filled the gap in literature by answering calls for a simplified learning transfer diagnostic using mini-scale variables and is presented as an alternative shortened version of the learning transfer system inventory (LTSI).

The research instrument or diagnostic provides an organisational guide used to explore, explain and improve the effectiveness of learning transfer within organisations. This study’s research instrument has therefore demonstrated it’s suitable as a framework or diagnostic for investigating organisational issues such as learning transfer and provided an answer to this study’s second research objective.

7.2.2.3 High annual training expenditure versus low learning transfer rates
Organisations researched commented that training was an essential part of business development, growth and competitive advantage, which provided a
reason for the multi-billion dollars reportedly spent on organisational learning annually. The results further indicated a lack of organisational processes for learning, low levels of stakeholder ownership and accountability for learning and inadequate learning support and follow up of learning that resulted in poor learning transfer rates. This researcher’s findings therefore provided an explanation for the estimated high amounts spent annually on training versus the resultant low learning transfer rates reported by the training and development industry and highlighted in literature as discussed in Chapter 1. These study finding have provided an explanation for this study's third research objective.

7.2.2.4 Diverse industry environments
Although the organisations researched were selected from diverse industries, for example retail/consumer services, market research, not-for-profit, government and the automotive industry, each reported similar experiences in addressing learning transfer issues. Findings further indicated that regardless of the organisational management structure, whether flat or hierarchical, similar difficulties were experienced and identified in addressing the learning transfer issues of organisational learning culture, ownership and accountability for learning and learning support.

These similar experiences in exploring or attempting to improve learning transfer within the organisations researched suggested diverse industry environments and different organisational management structures were not limiting or enabling learning transfer factors.

7.2.2.5 A one-process-fits-all approach for accountability
A one-process-fits-all approach to accountability was not possible (Blagescu, De Las Casas & Loyde 2005). Approaches to accountability differed within and across organisations and depended on the issue, the context and the stakeholders involved (Blagescu, De Las Casas & Loyde 2005). This study acknowledges the latter statement and agree that within organisations differing contextual approaches to accountability apply, however this study's findings were contrary to the former statement.
Organisations researched in this study were from different industry sectors, however findings indicated the lack of organisational and management accountability was a common theme.

Findings suggested a one-solution-fits-all approach to organisational learning accountability was or might be possible in the right environment. In that, notwithstanding the individual and contextual issues of accountability; by addressing the basic issues of organisational learning ownership; communication of organisational and individual learning needs; having an effective learning process in place; and positive support for and follow-up of learning, could result in a common approach to addressing learning accountability across organisations.

**7.2.2.6 Manager’s ownership, accountability, support and coaching of learning**

As identified above, this research suggested ninety percent of employees reported low levels of manager ownership and accountability for learning and received inadequate learning support for and follow up of learning, which resulted in restricted ability to transfer their learning and therefore employees’ self-initiated and actioned learning transfer independent of their managers.

Ten percent of employees did however receive their manager’s support and follow up of their learning. Their managers took ownership of the learning their direct reports had undertaken and provided accountability for its application into the workplace. The increased levels of learning support and follow up coaching enabled employees to transfer and apply their workplace learning efficiently and appropriately.

These six research contributions to knowledge have extended the theoretical work of authors and tested theory into new areas. This research’s contributions have added to knowledge in the fields of learning transfer, learning and development, organisational development and organisational accountability. The limitations of this study and recommendations and implications for future research are now discussed.

**7.2.3 Limitations**

Goold’s (2006) ninth barrier to learning transfer described the funding environment and financial structure where budgetary accountability for training
may increase departmental tensions that restricted management’s openness to new learning initiative. This study acknowledged the funding environment, and perhaps extended this barrier to include the current economic climate in which organisations operated and that these conditions influenced training decisions and expenditure on training. This research investigated individual learner’s beliefs and experiences of their learning transfer journey and how organisations and managers provided influence over that journey. The economic environment therefore, whilst recognised, fell outside the purview of the present study.

7.2.4 **Recommendations and implications for further research**

During the analysis of data, several additional themes emerged as possible areas for further research. Given that all five Australian organisations researched were experiencing similar issues with learning transfer, replication of this study across organisations in other countries may provide cultural implications and further insights into the work environment, stakeholder influence and organisational actions as overarching factors influencing learning transfer.

Given these similar difficulties and experiences across the organisations researched in dealing with issues of learning transfer, this research’s conclusions raise questions as to the implications for other learning institutions such as on-line, further and higher education. This research recommends that future studies investigating institutional learning processes use the adapted activity system analytical framework as their research instrument for identifying enabling or limiting factors of their learning transfer climate.

Outlined below are additional themes arising from this study’s research data, however were beyond the scope of this study and represent avenues for future research enquiry.

Organisations researched placed high value on internal communications with different levels of management and different departments prior to and post training. Results reported this value in the context of identifying the more formal learning processes and the support for learning that was currently in place, however one interviewee observed as highly self-motivated expressed a desire for less formal processes for learning. This suggests an avenue for further research
exists in identifying the value of informal communications and therefore informal organisational learning opportunities.

Findings reported organisations offered limited or no learning processes for assisting learners to transfer and apply their learning. This included a lack of organisational or managerial support for learning, which employees reported would have been of value. The lack of learning support influenced employee’s views and perceptions of the value of training and in several instances their ability to transfer learning.

The significant majority of employee's however, in the absence of learning processes or learning support, self-initiated learning transfer independent of their managers. Employees viewed self-initiated learning transfer as their responsibility and therefore regarded the independent transfer and application of their learning as warranted. What learners transferred and applied independently therefore produced ad hoc and therefore questionable learning transfer results. Future studies of self-initiated learning transfer and the results it produced may isolate this training value and indicate whether self-initiated learning transfer provided appropriate alignment to training outcomes and organisational objectives.

Advancements in technology that influenced training delivery methods were identified by employees, managers and learning and development professionals as altering the current and future landscape of organisational learning. Several interviewees commented that their organisation should investigate alternative methods of training delivery. Organisations expressed difficulties with taking key people out of the workplace for face-to-face training and therefore alternative methods of training delivery need to take into account not only the time away from the desk but also the location of training, mobility of the workforce and general work constraints.

These four methods of training delivery provide further lines of enquiry for future studies that explore, for example, technological advancements in learning delivery, the alignment of these technologies with the business and workplace needs or specific investigations of organisational learning practices.
As identified, this study’s research instrument provided research design structure and process for the current investigation. The research instrument provided an appropriate organisational guide or diagnostic designed to identify organisational learning transfer barriers and therefore was an effective method for exploring the learning transfer climate within organisations. Future studies seeking to investigate a wide range of organisational issues may find this study’s three moderating variables, the organisational environment (MV1), organisational stakeholders (MV2) and organisational actions (MV3), useful investigative artefacts or tools for research enquiry.


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Appendix I
Method to inform and guide the process of data collection

This researcher adapted Mwanza's 8-step process, notational structure and pointer for question development in the context of this study and with the researcher's adapted activity system analytical framework (the research instrument). 16 aligned interview questions were developed (2 final review questions were asked requesting any further general comments – total 18 questions). Identified below is the sequence of how this study's adapted notational structure (see table 3.7) and adapted pointers for question development (see table 3.8) identified the 16 semi-structured interview questions (see table 3.9). Note: Question development below is in notational structure order and were reordered for interview format (see Appendix III together with Questions 17 and 18).

Interview Question Development

1A: Adapted Notational Structure Pointers for Question Forming (ANSPFQF)

What tools does the subject use to satisfy the objective and how?

1A.1: Adapted Activity System Analytical Framework (AASAF) Interview Question (AASAFRQ)

What support was available and how were the learning goals and learning process communicated. Did this provide an understanding of both individual and organisational learning value?

1A.1.1: Aligned Interview Question (AIQ)

Q1 Prior to your training, describe what support you received for this training event from:

   a) Your supervisor / manager?
   b) The training and development department?
   c) Your peers and work colleagues?

1A.1.2: AIQ

Q2 Did the actions, communications, or opinions of others influence your approach to the training event? Yes / No

If yes, please explain how these actions, communications, or opinions of those below influenced you:
a) Your supervisor / manager?
b) The training and development department?
c) Your peers and work colleagues?

If no, then please explain why not?

1B: ANSPFQF

What tools does the subject use to satisfy the objective and how?

1B.1: AASAFRQ

How did the learning intervention process influence and assist the learner to change their behaviour?

1B.1.1: AIQ

Q3 These three questions ask you to describe your thoughts, beliefs and motivation leading up to the training event.

a) My overall thoughts leading up to the training were ............
b) I believed that this training would ............
c) My motivation for completing the training was ............

2: ANSPFQF

What rules affect the way the subject satisfies the objective and how?

2.1: AASAFRQ

What corporate and individual performance expectations were placed on the learner to complete the learning intervention and transfer new learning to the workplace?

2.1.1: AIQ

Q4 Who asked you to attend the training?

Were the course objectives clearly outlined by this person? Yes / No

If yes then;

a) Explain your understanding of why you were participating in the training event?
b) Can you explain the personal benefits of completing the training event?
c) Can you explain the organisational benefits of completing the training event?
d) In your opinion describe how the course objectives where met at the conclusion of the training event.

If no then;

Please describe what explanations you were given for completing the training event and by whom?
3A: ANSPFQF

How does division of labour affect the way the subject satisfies the objective?

3A.1: AASAFRQ

What issues of organisational culture affected the learner’s ability to transfer new learning?

3A.1.1: AIQ

Q6 Explain how your training event was discussed with you in the days following your returning to work, with;

   a) Your supervisor / manager?
   b) The training and development department?
   c) Your peers and/or others that attended the course?

3A.1.2: AIQ

Q7 From your own perspective, describe the ways you implemented your new knowledge into your everyday work environment?

3B: ANSPFQF

How does division of labour affect the way the subject satisfies the objective?

3B.1: AASAFRQ

How did the organisational learning transfer climate affect the learner’s ability to transfer new learning?

3B.1.1: AIQ

Q8 Provide a description of the assistance that you received when attempting to apply your new learning into your workplace, from;

   a) Your supervisor / manager?
   b) The training and development department?
   c) Your peers and work colleagues?

3B.1.2: AIQ

Q9 Provide a description of the ongoing encouragement that you received following your return to your workplace, from;

   a) Your supervisor / manager?
   b) The training and development department?
   c) Your peers and work colleagues?
3C: ANSPFQF

How does division of labour affect the way the subject satisfies the objective?

3C.1: AASAFRQ

Explain your perceived locus of control over your ability to transfer the new learning following the learning intervention, and how does this differ from your perceptions prior to the learning intervention?

3C.1.1: AIQ

Q5 Prior to this training event, did you believe you had the power or personal capability to apply what you were going to learn into your day-to-day work environment? **Yes / No.**

If yes then;

Please offer an explanation of your perceived abilities in applying the new learning into the workplace?

If no then;

Please offer an explanation of perceived barriers hindering your application of new learning into the workplace?

3C.1.2: AIQ

Q12 The following questions ask you to describe the positive and negative influences the organisation as a whole had over your ability to apply your new learning. Question 7 asked you to describe ways they implemented your new learning – this question is asking what support or lack thereof did you receive from the organisation.

We previously discussed your perceived power to apply what was learnt: So were you able to positively apply what you had learnt from the training event into your day-to-day work environment? **Yes / No**

If yes, then explain how each of the following perspectives supported you in applying the new learning:

a) The internal organisational processes?
b) The senior executives?
c) Your supervisor / manager?
d) The training and development department?
e) Your peers or work colleagues?

If no, then explain how each of the following perspectives impeded your ability to apply your new learning:

a) The internal organisational processes?
b) The senior executives?
c) Your supervisor / manager?
d) The training and development department?
e) Your peers or work colleagues?

**4: ANSPFQF**

How do the tools in use affect the way the community satisfies the objective?

**4.1: AASAFRQ**

What role did the organisational stakeholder’s play prior to, during, and following the learning intervention?

**4.1.1: AIQ**

Q10 About the obstacles you may have faced when applying your training:

Provide a description of the hurdles or barriers that you encountered when attempting to apply the new learning into your workplace, from the perspective of;

- a) The internal organisational processes?
- b) Your supervisor / manager?
- c) The training and development department?
- d) Your peers and work colleagues?

**4.1.2: AIQ**

Q11 About how you overcame these particular obstacles:

Explain the methods you used to overcome these hurdles and barriers?

**5: ANSPFQF**

What rules affect the way the community satisfies their objective and how?

**5.1: AASAFRQ**

What is the view of training within the organisation? In what ways do the organisational stakeholders influence the transfer of new learning?

**5.1.1: AIQ**

Q13 In that your organisation may view training as an opportunity to improve, an essential part of business, a nice to have, or something that just ticks the box.

From your experience, how does your organisation view training in general?

**5.1.2: AIQ**

Q14 About the general views and perceptions of others, within the organisation, of training:

Describe how you and others within the organisation generally view training?
a) Yourself?
b) Senior executives?
c) Your supervisor / manager?
d) The training and development department?
e) Your peers or work colleagues?

6: ANSPFQF

How does the division of labour affect the way the community satisfies the objective?

6.1: AASAFRQ

How does the organisational culture and learning transfer climate influence stakeholders?

6.1.1: AIQ

Q15 About your own views on the current process within your organisations:

With the previous question in mind, describe your views of the organisational processes that influence learning and professional development within your organisation?

6.1.2: AIQ

Q17 About how the internal process could be improved and your support for your direct reports:

a) Direct reports: As a manager, please provide a comment on how you handle the pre and post learning processes discussed in this interview with your direct reports?
b) Direct reports: And further, please explain how you might be able to improve that process with your direct reports?
c) Direct reports and No direct reports: How do you believe your manager could have improved the process of assisting you prior to the training and applying your new learning into the workplace.
Appendix II
Demographic Interview Questionnaire

Demographic Interview Questions

Please answer all questions and return completed questionnaire by email to plever@xxxxxxx as soon as possible:

i) Age bracket (please circle one) 25 to 35 36 to 45 46 to 55 56 to 65

ii) a) Your Title:

b) Your Role:

c) Number of direct reports: ..................

d) Roles of direct reports:

iii) Number of years at this organisation:

iv) Detail any Learning and Development experience prior to and with your current organisation:

v) Have you attended an internal training course/s during the past 6 to 18 months:
(please circle one) Yes No

If yes, then when? ...........................................................................................................

vi) Describe your recent internal course/s from question v) in as much detail as possible:
(eg. Leadership, Management, Professional Development, Marketing, Sales, Customer Service, etc):

vii) Was the training conducted at head office, a branch location or external location?

Thank You
Appendix III
Interview Questions

The confidentiality and anonymity of both your organisation and yourself is paramount. Your name or the name of the organisation will not be used in any documentation; rather a code is assigned to you. Please be assured that any individual information you provide today is not discussed with your organisation, only the combined results from all interviews as a whole.

As you know your interview will be digitally recorded, however all recordings will be deleted once they have been transcribed, so please be as honest and open as you can when answering these research questions. Also, I may make a few notes during the interview.

The first 5 questions will ask you about your experiences and perceptions leading up to your training, and from there questions will relate to what happened upon returning to work, perceptions of your organisation's learning environment, and then on your current practices: Ok, let's start by thinking about the recent internal training event you outlined in the demographic questionnaire;

**Question 1: About internal support prior to your training:** Support may include both formal and informal discussions and actions, via both written and verbal communication.

Prior to your training, describe what support you received for this training event from;

a) Your supervisor / manager?

b) The training and development department?

c) Your peers and work colleagues?

**Question 2: About people who influenced your approach to the training:**

Did the actions, communications, or opinions of others influence your approach to the training event? **Yes / No**

If yes, please explain how these actions, communications, or opinions of those below influenced you;

a) Your supervisor / manager?

b) The training and development department?

c) Your peers and work colleagues?

If no, then please explain why not?
Question 3:  About your motivation to attend the training:

These three questions ask you to describe your thoughts, beliefs and motivation leading up to the training event?

a) My overall thoughts leading up to the training were ............

b) I believed that this training would ............

c) My motivation for completing the training was ............

Question 4:  About the internal request for you to attend the training:

Who asked you to attend the training?

Were the course objectives clearly outlined by this person? Yes / No

If yes then;

a) Explain your understanding of why you were participating in the training event?

b) Can you explain the personal benefits of completing the training event?

c) Can you explain the organisational benefits of completing the training event?

d) In your opinion describe how the course objectives were met at the conclusion of the training event?

If no then;

a) Please describe what explanations you were given for completing the training event and by whom?

Question 5:  About your personal ability to apply what you had learnt at the training event:

Prior to this training event, did you believe you had the power or personal capability to apply what you were going to learn into your day-to-day work environment? Yes / No.

If yes then;

a) Please offer an explanation of your perceived abilities in applying the new learning into the workplace?

If no then;

b) Please offer an explanation of perceived barriers hindering your application of new learning into the workplace?
Question 6: About discussions upon returning to work after completing the training:

Explain how your training event was discussed with you in the days following your returning to work, with;

a) Your supervisor / manager?

b) The training and development department?

c) Your peers and/or others that attended the course?

Question 7: About how you implemented your training into the workplace:

From your own perspective, describe the ways you implemented your new knowledge into your everyday work environment?

Question 8: About the assistance you received from others upon returning to work: this assistance may have included methods for adapting new learning, help with implementing it, or mentoring and coaching sessions, etc.

Provide a description of the assistance that you received when attempting to apply your new learning into your workplace from;

a) Your supervisor / manager?

b) The training and development department?

c) Your peers and work colleagues?

Question 9: About the ongoing internal processes available to you, assisting you to further apply your training, in the weeks and months following training: This may have included further reading, suggested research, or even further training.

Provide a description of the ongoing encouragement that you received following your return to your workplace from;

a) Your supervisor / manager?

b) The training and development department?

c) Your peers and work colleagues?

Question 10: About the obstacles you may have faced when applying your training:

Provide a description of the hurdles or barriers that you encountered when attempting to apply the new learning into your workplace, from the perspective of;
Question 11: About how you overcame these particular obstacles:

Explain the methods you used to overcome these hurdles and barriers?

Question 12: The following questions ask you to describe the positive and negative influences the organisation as a whole had over your ability to apply your new learning. Question 7 asked you describe ways they implemented your new learning – this question is asking what support or lack thereof did you receive from the organisation.

We previously discussed your perceived power to apply what was learnt: So were you able to positively apply what you had learnt from the training event into your day-to-day work environment? Yes / No

If yes, then explain how each of the following perspectives supported you in applying the new learning:

a) The internal organisational processes?
b) The senior executives?
c) Your supervisor / manager?
d) The training and development department?
e) Your peers or work colleagues?

If no, then explain how each of the following perspectives impeded your ability to apply your new learning:

a) The internal organisational processes?
b) The senior executives?
c) Your supervisor / manager?
d) The training and development department?
e) Your peers or work colleagues?

Question 13: About your organisations approach to training: In that your organisation may view training as an opportunity to improve, an essential part of business, a nice to have, or something that just ticks the box.

From your experience, how does your organisation view training in general?
**Question 14:** About the general views and perceptions of other within the organisation of training:

Describe how you and others within the organisation generally view training?

a) Yourself?
b) Senior executives?
c) Your supervisor / manager?
d) The training and development department?
e) Your peers or work colleagues?

**Question 15:** About your own views on the current process within your organisations:

With the previous question in mind, describe your views of the organisational processes that influence learning and professional development within your organisation?

**Question 16:** About how the internal process could be improved and your support for your direct reports:

a) **Direct reports:** As a manager, please provide a comment on how you handle the pre and post learning processes discussed in this interview with your direct reports?
b) **Direct reports:** And further, please explain how you might be able to improve that process with your direct reports?
c) **Direct reports and No direct reports:** How do you believe your manager could have improved the process of assisting you prior to the training and applying your new learning into the workplace.

**Question 17:**

Was there a question about your training experience that you thought I might ask but didn’t?

**Question 18:**

Is there anything more you would like to say on the topic?

Thank you for your time!
Appendix IV
Researchers’ observations during interviews

Organisation A

The organisation and interviews

This organisation has conducted a number of competitor acquisitions in the past two years, to the point where regulatory authorities have placed a restriction on the organisation from owning any more competitors in some Australian states. Many of their acquisitions were small to medium family operated businesses with most still operating the same core staff. This organisation operates in a conservative industry, and has a hierarchical business model that promotes resistance to change. Long-term employees are particularly resistant to changing their behaviours to the new or more updated sales and customer service models being implemented.

The five employees interviewed ranged from mid-management to junior executive levels, all but one had direct reports, with the remaining having between one and fifteen. Ages ranged between 25 and 65 and length of service between two and sixteen years.

Organising and integrating these varied organisational cultures to align under one banner has been a difficult task for this organisational management team. From these planned growth strategies and comments made by the interviewees a complete restructure of the way this organisation manages the training function is required.

This is an organisation with multiple small locations Australia wide, and the difficulty of taking key people out of the workplace for face-to-face training is noted. Several interviewees commented that the organisation probably needs to investigate alternative methods of training delivery.

Positive impressions
The need for training was viewed by all interviewees as important, and all participants interviewed sought the support of their team members and peers in adjusting to the new organisational structure, policies and procedures being introduced.

**Less positive comments**

The issue of very poor manager support, both pre and post training, was an item that all interviewees highlighted. Employees are expected to implement and apply training without direct or indirect support or coaching from managers or the learning and development department.

As a result of the organisational expansion the learning and development department has been inundated by requests for training. Interviewees viewed the Learning and Development Department (L&D) as producing tick the box training with no support for learning transfer and no follow up or mentoring for training application.

Branch A disconnect or gap is perceived by regional employees between the branch management and head office managements. The acquisition process has created this impression due to the requirement of once locally managed business units that are now required to report to an intra or interstate head office.

**General comments**

Interviewed managers seem willing to support their direct reports but say that the current organisational culture and time constraints are limiting factors. Interviewees perceive that training being pushed from head office with little regard for coalface needs, and the fact that leadership development programs are only made available to head office staff is a serious de-motivator for outer suburban, regional and interstate managers.

**Organisation B**

**The organisation and interviews**

This organisation provides an incredible amount of training for which individuals are instructed by email to attend, with little or no explanation of why they are
attending. This organisation provides a large amount of regulatory, technical and professional development training for their employees. All interviewees mentioned the excessive overload of mandatory training required to be completed during work hours. Medium to lower level employees, as part of their employment contract, are then expected to make up the loss of on the job work time as unpaid overtime.

The seven employees interviewed ranged from mid-management to junior executive levels, all but three had direct reports, with the remaining having between either one or two. Ages ranged between 25 and 45 and length of service between two and ten years.

The organisation generally uses external training providers, however no follow up, coaching or mentoring support is provided prior to or following training. The reason given by the L&D department was that if follow up or coaching was used it would impact employee workload and the training schedule.

Positive impression

This organisation has strong focus on mandatory training, but provides an excessive amount of training. All interviewees considered the quality and amount of their training to be better than previous workplaces but also consider the training load as an overload, in some instances training for trainings sake.

Branch interviewees suggested that branch offices provide a more friendly work environment, and that there is a strong team focus, however branches are not offered as many training options as the head office. One interviewee-manager relationship has become supportive and positive (see general comments below).

Less positive comments

Workload and time constraints are offered as a reason that prior to training there is no needs analysis performed by the L&D department. The same reason was expressed as to why L&D did not follow up on trainee’s learning transfer or application.
Interviewees mentioned that there was no follow up, coaching or mentoring from their managers. Managers in this organisation did value training, however provided no ongoing support for their direct report’s learning transfer or application. Two factors were offered by interviewees firstly, workload and time constraints and secondly, that managers do not want to talk to L&D since this department doubles as the HR function.

The lack of a supportive culture in this organisation is highlighted in an interviewee comment that managers perceive that these discussions may be interpreted by others as their weakness or their lack of managerial skills.

**General comments**

One positive highlight was that one interviewee attended the same training as her manager. Prior to this training event her manager was disinterested and unsupportive, thinking the training was an interruption to their day-to-day workflow, however post training both were motivated to apply what they had learnt. The result of this increased ownership of and accountability for the learning, was that her manager had become very supportive, mentoring and coaching the interviewee to effectively apply her new learning.

**Organisation C**

**The organisation and interviews**

The CEO of this not-for-profit has initiated several organisational change measures. These measures include the implementation of 360-degree constructive feedback process on managers. All employees interviewed expressed a strong sense of value that their employment was doing something humanitarianly worthwhile, and therefore they were helping people toward a better way of life.

The five employees interviewed ranged from mid-management to junior executive levels, all had direct reports of between two and fifteen employees. Ages ranged between 36 and 65 and length of service between six and eighteen years.

Until two years ago this organisation operated on a State basis however, all states have now amalgamated and have been brought under a national banner and head office. Some functions, training included, have been decentralised which is
considered positive by some individuals interviewed, but others commented that it has created delays and some disconnects organisationally particularly for training. Since amalgamation, the senior management team has become distant and no one seems to know if the current training direction is or has been aligned with corporate objectives.

Positive impressions

Interviewees suggested that the organisation values training, and felt that individual L&D personnel were doing a good job, however although some interviewees agree that they had team support, most felt left on their own in applying new learning.

All interviewees had direct reports and agreed that the 360-degree feedback from direct reports were of value. Interviewees noted, that in their attempts to implement this strategy they have been criticised by their managers, and therefore are no longer willing to espouse criticism, citing they are risking job security.

Branch interviewees expressed that the branch offices had a more relaxed and less stressful working environment and found the head office environment stuffy and somewhat distant and unfriendly in nature.

Less positive comments

Interviewees were critical of the organisations attitude toward supporting their application of learning. There was no follow up by L&D or managers following training, and no coaching or mentoring by managers prior to or post training. There is no ongoing support to identify if a behaviour change had occurred following training or to ensure effective application of learning.

All interviewees expressed reluctance to provide support for their direct reports. As managers, they have not been required by the organisation to follow up, mentor, or coach direct reports following training and do not have any performance reviews or measures applied on them to do so. This is supported by the fact that this organisation has a policy of conducting bi-annual performance reviews but no Managers are forced to comply, so only approximately 10% of employees are being evaluated.
Discussions between the manager and their direct reports that establish and agree upon training requirements for the following year are never actioned. Interviewees suggest that they and their direct reports are time poor, too busy to approve the time away from work to attend training.

**General comments**

Training is considered by most as training for trainings sake, tick the box style of training, and then move on to the next training event. All interviewees commented that they would value some form of process to identify actual workplace application. Most felt that a process confirming application would make a significant difference to the amount, type and approvals of training.

**Organisation D**

**The organisation and interviews**

This government department can be described as a competitive hierarchical environment of educated and generally motivated employees held in high regard by industry and could be described as having two perspectives on organisational change. Firstly, the longer-term employees and senior management team appeared resistant to change; and Secondly, the degree-qualified younger employees, mid to lower management team and high achievers were opportunistic and upwardly mobile. Organisation D was selected due to this competitive work environment, the highly motivated work force driven by personal development and also the importance placed on professional development training motivated by the CEO. Interviews were conducted at their Sydney head office only.

The six employees interviewed ranged from senior to junior executive levels, all but one had direct reports, with the remaining having between three and twenty. Ages ranged between 25 and 65, and length of service between six and twenty-four years.

The contact person identified their learning process, as the senior management team deciding the organisations strategic direction, followed by monthly meetings to evaluate progress to which L&D was invited. An aligned training needs plan was developed that created their training program.
Two more senior executives chose to respond generally with the corporate line, sometimes it was more what they didn’t say, the roundabout way they answered the interview questions, or the way they felt compelled to respond with a pause or delay that was interesting. With a little more probing and questioning enough data was received to put some reoccurring and consistent threads together from these interviews.

Each of the senior executive team interviewed was appointed an external business coach during their leadership course and each one of them have retained this individual coach even though the course was completed over six months prior. All interviewees suggested that the coaching process was of ongoing value to them and the organisation.

**Positive impressions**

Training was viewed as an essential part of business, training directly influenced the department’s products, and the department had not reduced its training budget. There was a view that the learning and development department was generally supportive, however this view of support was not held by others interviewed.

The CEO is driving regulatory and professional development training and it was indicated that this may be due to the fact that he is personally accountable for all government, industry and public reporting (this was noted as a significant difference to the level of accountability expected of CEO’s in other organisations interviewed).

**Less positive comments**

The L&D department has a highly active needs analysis process however, employees are told to attend training, and there is little individual support leading up to training from the L&D department or interviewees managers. This lack of support was highlighted by comments that the department has reactive managers and no one follows up to see if or how training has been applied.

Some of the more senior executives were seen to resist change and were reverting to old, pre-training behaviours. There is no coaching or mentoring process in place
for employees even though senior executive saw the importance of retaining their leadership coaches.

Time and workload constraints reduce attendances to training as some individuals interviewed perceived training as low value and therefore wasting work time. Individuals are less inclined to request training as it is viewed within this organisation as exposing a weakness in their abilities.

**General comment**

L&D and managers require a follow up process, or a guide to assist managers with pre, post, and application conversations. The work volume and competitive nature of their work environment seems to have created low manager and peer support mechanisms. All managers with direct reports thought that they could improve their approach to learning transfer through supportive function such as coaching and mentoring staff if directed to do so, but all expressed time constraints as a limiting factor. Employees spend considerable time out of the office creating difficulties with attending face-to-face training. The development of accessible training on the road was seen as a positive alternative to formal training.

**Organisation E**

**The organisation and interviews**

This organisation’s professional development training has only been offered to head office personnel in the past two years. Prior to that, training has been exclusively directed toward customer service and technical training requirements.

The eight employees interviewed ranged from senior to junior executive levels, all but three had direct reports, with the remaining having between one and fourteen. Ages ranged between 25 and 55 and length of service between two and twenty-three years.

The comments below refer to firstly, six out of the eight interviewees, and then further below interviews seven and eight. These first six interviews followed the general views of other interviewees in other organisations however, interviews seven and eight outline a different view in relation to their supportive manager environment.
**Positive impressions**

All interviewees believed that the professional development program offered has assisted in their career development and felt that they now have a stronger connection with the more senior management team through the course mentoring sessions.

Generally group, team and peer support is high. Interviewees thought that the professional development courses had allowed them to meet and work with others cross-functionally. In particular, they valued making contact with those employees in departments that the interviewees would not normally have access to in their day-to-day work environment.

**On a less positive note**

The L&D department provided no course objectives, course outlines, or the time commitment required prior to training. Interviewees managers provided no support prior to or following the training courses. The reason given by interviewees one to six was that their managers are too busy and just disinterested.

Many felt that there was little or no follow up of how they might apply their new skills and knowledge, or even if they were actually applying it. Individuals were left to decide on their own how and what was important or appropriate to apply from the course. Interviewees suggested that in this organisation there is a culture of the reactive management approach, resulting in reprimand for applying new knowledge incorrectly.

Branch interviewees from branch offices mentioned that the head office training group functions too slow to react to their branch market needs and as a result some state branches are arranging their own training which may be misaligned to corporate objectives.

**General comments**

Interviewees thought they had been individually selected, and singled out, to participate in professional development courses. The organisation expressed that attendance may potentially lead to further leadership roles within the
organisation. Unfortunately, when they attended the training it became clear that in some cases whole state departments were attending, reducing the perceived value of their selection.

All interviewees felt that a detailed discussion with their Manager about why they were attending the course, course objective, and time away from work expectation prior to the professional development training would have been valuable. Further, all mentioned that a coaching or mentoring approach post training with their managers would have helped when they attempted to apply their new learning into the workplace.

**Organisation E (interviews 7 and 8)**

Regardless of this organisation's training environment outlined above both individuals believed that they had maintained motivation as a result of their manager's high accountability for the learning and the support, coaching and follow up that was provided. They felt empowered by their manager's approach, encouraging them to effectively transfer and apply their new learning.

Both interviewees believed that other individuals less [or not] supported by their managers may have experienced a learning environment more likely to result in lower motivation, and therefore a poorer attitude toward their learning. Both mentioned they felt that others would have benefited from the higher level of support from their manager's that they had experienced.

**Positive impressions**

During the training courses group, team, and peer support was high for one of the individuals whilst the other participated in dysfunctional teams and therefore a very different training environment. Regardless of this training environment interviewees believed that a higher level of manager support pre and post training assisted them with their motivation to appropriately apply what was learnt.

Their manager's interest and actions in providing mentoring and coaching follow up directly influenced the interviewee's learning transfer, learning application and a positive outcome from training.
General comments

The experiences of these two interviewees seem to suggest that a learner that is supported, mentored and coached through their learning process may overcome many barriers to learning transfer.
Appendix V
Research Consent Information Sheet

Research Consent Information Sheet

Project Title:
An exploration of factors influencing organisational learning transfer using an activity system analytical framework.

Principal Investigator:
Paul Lever - PhD (Business) Candidate

Introduction to Research Project:
The organisational learner is the subject of this research and this study seeks to investigate aspects of the organisation’s performance, management, practices and standards, staff attitudes and levels of satisfaction through the lens of an organisational learning environment. This research may also provide an organisational guide or diagnostic that suggests ways to improve the learning transfer climate by increasing the effectiveness of workplace learning transfer. The results from this research will be provided upon request to each participant, including yourself, in the form of a summarised report of the findings. This research will contribute to the completion of my PhD (Business) studies due for submission in early 2013.

Project Aim:
From the perspective of an employee’s professional development training the aim of this research is to understand enabling and limiting factors of their learning transfer: firstly, by exploring overarching learning transfer barriers as moderating factors influencing learning transfer within organisations; secondly, to identify a simplified methodology and research process for examining learning transfer issues within organisations; and thirdly, from the analysis of data, attempt to provide an explanation and correlation between the reported high annual
investments in organisational training and the suggested low learning transfer rates training produces.

What Participation Involves:

This research will be in the form of face-to-face one-on-one interviews conducted within a carefully selected sample of organisations in Australia. Research participants will be chosen voluntarily by your organisation and all interviews will be conducted at a location chosen by your organisation. Interviews will be electronically recorded to maintain interview data accuracy, will be approximately 1 hour in length and be conducted preferably during normal working hours. There may be a further requirement for a follow up interview at a later date however this would be arranged at your convenience.

Organisation and Participant Confidentiality, Anonymity, Risks and Rights:

Research participants will be asked to comment on organisational practices and their relationships with, beliefs of and perspectives on their colleagues and their managers. Participant’s comments will be explored in relation to the effectiveness of workplace learning transfer within their organisation. Participants will be assigned codes for each interview to ensure the research participant's confidentiality and anonymity. Research results may also highlight organisational management issues. No company will be identified and no company names will be used rather only industry sectors will be acknowledged, for example Retail, Government, Consumer Services or Not for Profit (NFP) sectors. The process of interview data collection will be subject to Swinburne’s Human Resources Ethics Committee (SUHREC) and in line with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. This means that I am unable to report any details that may identify your organisation or the participants involved.

It is my hope that the research topic is of interest to you and your organisation however should you need further information please contact me or my PhD supervisor directly. Research consent forms have been enclosed for your organisation to sign in the first instance and then each selected participant to sign prior to the commencement of any research. Your participation would be greatly appreciated and thank you for your time in reading my proposal.

Further Information – who to contact:

Researcher: Paul Lever

Contact on: xxx

Mobile number: xxx

Email address: xxx for further information.
University Supervisor: Dr. Tony Whitefield

**Concerns/Complaints about the project – who to contact:**

This project has been approved by or on behalf of Swinburne’s Human Resources Ethics Committee (SUHREC) in line with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this project you can contact:

Research Ethics Officer

Swinburne Research (H68)

Swinburne University of Technology

PO Box 218, Hawthorn, Victoria, 3122.

Or

Phone: xxx
Appendix VI
Research Consent Form - Organisation

Research Consent Form - Organisation

Project Title:

An exploration of factors influencing organisational learning transfer using an activity system analytical framework.

Principal Investigator: Paul Lever PhD (Business) Candidate

Consent:

1. I consent to Paul Lever conducting research within ………………………………………. (insert company name) on the project named above. I have been provided a copy of the project consent information statement to which this consent form relates and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

2. In relation to this project, please circle your response to the following:
   - I agree to selected employees being interviewed by the researcher
   - I agree to allow these interviews to be recorded by electronic device

3. I acknowledge that:
   - (a) the organisation’s participation is voluntary and that the company is free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation;
   - (b) the Swinburne project is for the purpose of research and not for profit;
   - (c) any identifiable information about the organisation, myself or the participants which is gathered in the course of and as the result of participating in this project will be (i) collected and retained for the purpose of this project and (ii) accessed and analysed by the researcher(s) for the purpose of conducting this project;
   - (d) the confidentiality and anonymity of the organisation will be preserved and will not be identified in publications or otherwise.

By signing this document I agree to participate in this project.

Name of Participant (please print): ...........................................................

Position Held: ..............................................................................................

Signature & Date: ................................................................./........./ 2011
Appendix VII
Research Consent Form – Participant

Research Consent Form- Participant

Project Title:
An exploration of factors influencing organisational learning transfer using an activity system analytical framework.

Principal Investigator:
Paul Lever PhD (Business) Candidate

Consent:

1. I consent to participate in the project named above. I have been provided a copy of the project consent information statement to which this consent form relates and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

2. In relation to this project, please circle your response to the following:
   - I agree to be interviewed by the researcher Yes No
   - I agree to allow the interview to be recorded by electronic device Yes No

3. I acknowledge that:
   (a) my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation;
   (b) the Swinburne project is for the purpose of research and not for profit;
   (c) any identifiable information about me which is gathered in the course of and as the result of my participating in this project will be (i) collected and retained for the purpose of this project and (ii) accessed and analysed by the researcher(s) for the purpose of conducting this project;
   (d) my anonymity is preserved and I will not be identified in publications or otherwise.

By signing this document I agree to participate in this project.

Name of Participant (please print): ..........................................................

Signature & Date: ..........................................................
Appendix VIII
University ethics approval

SUHREC Project 2011/158 An exploration of factors influencing organisational learning transfer using an activity system analytical framework.

Dr Tony Whitefield, FBE/Mr Paul Lever
Approved Duration: 15/08/2011 To 30/04/2013 [Adjusted]

I refer to the ethical review of the above project protocol undertaken on behalf of Swinburne's Human Research Ethics Committee (SUHREC) by SUHREC Subcommittee (SHESC4) at a meeting held on 29 July 2011. Your response to the review as e-mailed on 12 August 2011 was reviewed by a SHESC4 delegate.

I am pleased to advise that, as submitted to date, the project has approval to proceed in line with standard on-going ethics clearance conditions here outlined.

- All human research activity undertaken under Swinburne auspices must conform to Swinburne and external regulatory standards, including the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and with respect to secure data use, retention and disposal.

- The named Swinburne Chief Investigator/Supervisor remains responsible for any personnel appointed to or associated with the project being made aware of ethics clearance conditions, including research and consent procedures or instruments approved. Any change in chief investigator/supervisor requires timely notification and SUHREC endorsement.

- The above project has been approved as submitted for ethical review by or on behalf of SUHREC. Amendments to approved procedures or instruments ordinarily require prior ethical appraisal/clearance. SUHREC must be notified immediately or as soon as possible thereafter of (a) any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants and any redress measures; (b) proposed changes in protocols; and (c) unforeseen events which might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.

- At a minimum, an annual report on the progress of the project is required as well as at the conclusion (or abandonment) of the project.

- A duly authorised external or internal audit of the project may be undertaken at any time.

Please contact me if you have any queries about on-going ethics clearance. The SUHREC project number should be quoted in communication. Chief Investigators/Supervisors and Student Researchers should retain a copy of this e-mail as part of project record-keeping.

Best wishes for the project.
Secretary, SHESC4, Swinburne University
Appendix IX
Interview transcript example

Researcher’s statement: References to the interviewee, the organisation and other employees have been changed in this transcription to protect and maintain anonymity and confidentiality.

Interview transcript for interviewee D4MSS:

This is interview A4 on 26th October. It’s 3pm. We’ll start, thank you. Question one is about the internal support that you received for your training. That might include formal discussions or informal discussions or written or verbal communications. How did the organisation support you leading up to the training event – leading up to leadership I guess, because it’s an ongoing process – from your direct manager?

From my direct manager it was kind of a program that we were looking to run throughout the organisation. She was a corporate sponsor for it so there was a lot of explicit support and implicit support in terms of giving the focus to my area to deliver it. The people that were organising it and making sure it was run report though to me, but having said that we did it right from the top of the organisation right through to the first level of managers to ensure that we had a consistency going right across the board.

And you were involved personally in that?

I wasn’t involved in the selection of the materials. How some of it came about was there was an element of being able to get leaders to experience some of the nastier bits or the more challenging bits of leadership in a safe environment and I had used simulations in a previous role so when I was talking to the people development manager I said that I think the simulation might be the best way to do it where you can actually put some pressure on people to have to make real time decisions. I knew of a couple of people who do it so we brought in a few different providers and the successful provider structured a program around the LSI which was really good because that actually gave the behavioural anchoring.

I know that you are in charge of learning and development and it is part of your responsibility so there’s no point asking you questions about that. How did your colleagues and peers at your level view this project?

I think the appetite was there for it and it was the right time to do it. The organisation under the current highest level manager – can I ask? Yeah, you can say CEO.

The CEO has more of a people focus now than ever before. Well to my knowledge than ever before but I’ve only been here for six years myself. The previous CEO I had some overlap with was very procedural and very much about the work itself. The new CEO is very much more about the people so he believes that the level of influence you can have
and the level of value you can deliver as a functionary group depends on the way that people are actually taking the business forward. And we don’t do anything else – we’ve only got people and they are the only thing that we can use.

That’s right.

The only thing that we produce is what comes out from between the two ears of the people sitting there. So we have to make sure that our people are satisfied with the work that they are getting and also very happy to be here and a big part of that is being led properly and there have been a number of fits and starts about leadership and coaching and those sorts of things within the organisation before but they’d never anchored it back to behaviours like the LSI can do.

And the general approach to the training from your manager or that level, what was their approach to it? Was their concern, or did it feel confronting at the beginning?

They’re a very analytical group.

As you could imagine.

Mostly being specialists and even my senior manager who has got more of a finance background has got actually a little bit of experience back in the early days so she’s got the same sort of protocol that she follows. You need to prove to them that it will be something that will work. They need to be very, very comfortable with it. They also need to be intrinsically involved in. So when we got the people to present to us about the simulation it wasn’t a big stretch to actually get the executive management to engage with it – and luckily at that time I was sitting on the executive team as well so I had an insight into that. When we got the people in to talk to us about it as they were going through it they were showing logical links between the behaviours, the way you run through the experience, what that means and what it can bring back to the workplace. Because of the fact that the senior manager had a chance to be able to mould and modify it and make it really specific to what we do they were very comfortable with it.

It gave them buy in.

Yes.

Excellent. And the motivation of the organisation. What was behind the motivation to do this?

As I said, the whole issue about leadership through the organisation. We’ve got a history of people coming up through the organisation to become leaders and managers and senior managers as the old principal – the very best technical practitioners, because of the way the structure is the only way to go is up and they become managers and some succeed and some fail. Those that succeed don’t always have the academic grounding or the leadership understanding from that perspective and there are some very good, I wouldn’t say ‘natural leaders’ but people who are very good at picking up the frameworks easily. Then there are others that don’t do it particularly well and tend to manage on personal leadership approaches where they are a very high level practitioner and people respect them and will go with them. But an inconsistency across the board and we can’t have that inconsistency
because we've got business teams and there is a principle that you have to move from
team to team after a period of time. If you've got somebody who has been working on an
account for three years then that's probably long enough. You don't want them to get too
familiar so we need to move them around. As we are moving people from team to team
the experience of going to different teams and different styles and different behaviours,
particularly, and problematic for us. So we're certainly wanting to push the notion that we
are an employer of choice and we want people to want to work here and be happy and
satisfied and we thought that leadership was a key element of that.

**So is that the managers as well as the team members that are moved around?**

They are, but not as frequently.

**I'm not following the exact line because of your role. So the request for this was a
collaborative from the executive that you wanted to drive this through at least the
top level of management. Is that something that is going to flow through the rest of
the group, do you feel?**

Is has. What they've done is they've taken the LSI – the human synergistic approach – and
run it right down from the executive management level, through what we call the director
or business team leader level, down to the next level which is what we call the section
leaders – they are basically some team leaders – and down to the senior leaders which are
the supervisors. So anybody who has any direction control over anybody in the
organisation has gone through the LSI. Associated with that there has been a level of
coaching – a bit more coaching of course at the top end, but everybody through the
organisation has had a certain amount of coaching around the behaviours and the LSI and
they've all been through the simulations. So we've now got from the executive level right
down to the senior leaders everybody has done the simulation, at least one business
simulation, and I think we've almost finished a second one which is based on how you
work with clients and customers but still focusing back on the LSI. The next stage for us is
to look back to the first group that went through as we were learning how to do it and give
them some more challenges. Perhaps put them through another version of the simulation
but this time instead of giving them some blank canvas to work with and decisions to
make we'll give them something that is very jaundiced and say 'Guys, this is day one.
You've got this mess. How do you get yourself out of it?' So we are actually forcing them to
go down a certain path.

**When that's been rolled out through the organisation how does the organisation
handle the application of that? Do they know that it works? Is there a process that
you use?**

I suppose we probably haven't put a formal framework in to be able to go back and check
how well it's working. We are moving with all of our training towards the Kirkpatrick type
of assessment so that we can... At the moment we've got happy sheets, basically, but we
want to move it up to the point where we can actually see the application of it at the
colfface but we're not there yet. What we do have is we have a common language and that
was the good thing about the LSI – it gave us that common language that we can talk about
and by running it through the business down to the senior leader level and then also
explaining it to all of the other people within the organisation and explaining... Are you familiar with the LSI?

No, not particularly.

Okay, what they have is what they call a ‘circumflex’ and it talks about behaviours being either constructive behaviours or defensive behaviours. Aggressive-defensive-passive. So it’s broken into three areas. They colour code it so your positive behaviours are blue and this is things like being achievement focused and being self developing etc. Avoidance is green, so that’s things like avoiding making decisions or looking for approval from people and those types of things. The red area is like the power play or the oppositional. And that’s the language or the vernacular of the organisation now. Whenever we are doing anything, anybody at any level in the organisation can challenge their behaviour.

By saying you are a colour?

Rather than saying ‘You are being aggressive’ they can say ‘Hang on a second, that behaviour is a bit red. Can we look at a blue behaviour that we might be able to use for that? It’s great.

And if you were to say that in another organisation that hadn’t had this training you would be likely to get the sack.

Probably yeah.

So why is that...

Because of the acceptance right through the organisation right through to the leadership level. This circumflex view of the way that we do behave shows us the right areas to work at and it’s an accepted thing. It is something that people will not be picked up on if they challenge people.

At all?

I don’t think I’ve ever seen people picked up on it, like challenged for saying ‘That is not blue behaviour. Let’s do blue’ because it’s basically humbling. If a manager is doing something particularly negative or particularly oppositional and somebody says ‘Hang on a second. I’m a bit uncomfortable with that. I’d like us to have blue dialogue about it’ then the manager is not going to go ‘Raaarr’ they are going to go ‘Hang on a second, I’m supposed to be blue so let me think about how I can do that.’ When we first started doing it people would go ‘You’ve got to have some red and some green’ and the guys that were coaching us were saying ‘No, that’s a misunderstanding. What you are thinking is that blue is soft. Blue is not soft. There is blue steel in there. If you look at the affiliative then yes, you do have to have a relationship with people and be able to work with them and talk about their feelings but if you look at the achievement side of it which is another blue behaviour, you’ve actually got to be pretty strong to go for achievement.’ So everybody understands that now and if they do go into one of the green or red behaviours they can actually see that they can move it into the blue without losing the seriousness of it.
You said that’s filtered down now to supervisor level. Do their direct reports know what this is all about?

They do, yes. We had a presentation from one of the business coaches at one of our office forums and he got up there with the circumflex and showed everybody and everybody had a copy of it on their seats so they could take it away. He said ‘You may be thinking why have all these managers gone off on this three day thing and they’ve come back and they’re all happy chappies and they’ve got a different ways of looking at things? Well it’s because of this. You’ve got every right as a person working in this organisation to want the behaviours to be in the blue and this is what it’s all about.’ That wasn’t the full blown coaching thing but it at least gave people an understanding of what the language is about.

How has that been accepted in practice in the organisation?

I see it quite often and I see it quite often up here because I deal with the corporate services people a lot. I will have people say ‘Hang on, let’s do it in a blue way.’ I’ve seen it challenged in senior management meetings where people have started to get a bit heated and somebody, anybody – because people feel comfortable to do it – will say ‘You are not being very blue’ and that brings it back on line again. It’s a non-threatening way of saying to people ‘Well hang on, your behaviour is not acceptable. That’s not the way we do it.’ There’s going to be slip ups occasionally but in the main it seems to be working pretty well.

What about one on one discussions?

We can do the same thing with one on one discussions. It’s the language we should be speaking in the place now. We talk in colours.

When this was outlined was the course outlines very clearly articulated?

It was. The whole way that we got the LSI into the organisation was that we were having some management issues. The senior manager came to me and he said ‘I think we need to have a 360. I want our managers to know that they are being looked at from above, below, sideways etc.’ He said I’d like to have all these different things in the 360. You can go away and build a 360’ – I’m actually accredited with the Booth 360. I thought if we were to go away and do that it would cost us a fortunate and people are going to argue about what goes in it and there’s going to be a bit of reluctance for people to fill it in. Very simply and easily LSI is out there, it’s available, pull it off the shelf and just run it through the organisation and at least we can see what it looks like without having to spend a lot of money. At the same time we started looking at the issue of using these simulations. It just so happened that they both tied together really neatly and the people that were developing the simulations were working with the coaches that we had selected, because they were familiar with their work, so that the whole thing was built around the LSI. It was seamless.

Do you feel that those objectives have now been met?

I do. I really do. It’s clear for anybody going to a management role from within the organisation and it’s very clear for people coming into a management role from outside
the organisation how we do it in here and what we have as acceptable language and how
the behaviours have to support our own values as well. We make sure that's always done.

We talked about the course being implemented and people having a degree of
knowledge – that's what training is; it all hinges on how the conversation occurs
upon returning to work. How do you deal with that initially in the days following
the training and the weeks and months following? There are two very different...

In the lead up to the training we started doing the coaching, so there was the one on one
coaching with individuals before they went off and did the training. So they got an
understanding of what the LSI was and they were given the LSI survey to do. They had
roughly that context before they went off and when they were given the instructions about
the course with a little bit of pre-work and the pre-work was 'These are the sorts of things
that you will be able to do' they had that understanding. We ran it from the top down
through the organisation, so the executive first, the business team leaders and director
level, and then we went to the next level and the next level. The first group that went
through were guinea pigs basically. Nobody below them really understood or knew what
it was like or what it was about. They did it and then they came back to the workplace and
they were talking a funny language that nobody really understood what it was all about.
We then very rapidly ran it through the organisation and picked up the next level and then
the next level after that. The way that it was pushed through before we got those next
levels to the events was through the enthusiasm of the people who had been on the event,
because they had the LSI language and the experience. They came back and they were all
'That was great. That was the best thing we've ever done in all the time we've been here.
The organisation is investing money in us. We understand the things we've got to do
consistently' and they started having those conversations with their p

This process sounds a bit self-perpetuating because even though it's coming from
the top down, as each level learns it they are also reinforcing it with the level above
as well.

That's right, yes. And that whole version of being able to challenge up as well. And we've
got this principle of when people are at a management level there is the corporate
decisions and the corporate way of doing things and they have to support down and
challenge up. We have a corporate view of doing things and they will push that out and if
they want it refined then they can challenge up – they have to support and challenge.

So what support do they actually give practically?

For the message?

Yeah, for the message or generally.

Now is much better than it was about five years ago. Five years ago there were a lot of
'victims' within the organisation and there were a lot of people at quite senior
management levels that spoke in terms of 'us' and 'them'. If they went to deliver a decision
about remuneration to one of their staff the conversation might have been 'Look, I put you
down to get one of these but they...’ We’ve changed that around. Again, with the blue language you can’t be avoidant – be green – and go ‘It's somebody else's problem’ or you can’t be aggressive. You have to talk in terms of what the outcomes are and you have to be able to support them. They might disagree with them, and they know they can come and challenge them. So even if it is the management committee that says ‘No, you can’t give your person the % that you asked for’ they feel very confident that they can come and challenge that but at the end of the day they also know that they have to support the message down. So it’s a really different dynamic for the management at that level. We don’t see the same sort of transparent management ‘It’s not us, it's them’ that we used to.

**And how do you handle that personally yourself with your direct reports?**

I’ve always had the belief that you support down and challenge up. That’s what I’ve come from. Like I said, I’ve only been here for about six years and I came from an American organisation that very much had that way of doing things, so that’s been my belief all the way through. I think you’ve got to try and be as honest as you can be with everybody that reports to you and you certainly don’t blame anybody else for a decision. The decision stops with me so if it’s something that I can’t live with I will go and fight tooth and nail for it. If I lose, I lose, but I’m not going to turn around and say ‘That was theirs, not mine’. It may be ‘the organisation needs to do this.’

**Do you feel that you could improve that process yourself to your direct reports?**

I think I’m pretty good at it. I think basically because of my role I’ve had to become pretty good at it. There are some unpleasant aspects of my role and...

**I could imagine.**

I just have to do it. Talking to a previous role when I was with not my last company but the company before I was the person that did the restructuring. I was the hatchet man and I was in charge of corporate resourcing, learning and development but also if there were redundancies to do I had to go and do them. It got to a point where if people saw me turn up in in their office they would take the day off. I might be down there for a learning event or something and they’d all just disappear. But yes, you get used to it.

**If I were to ask you how your organisation views training, in a nutshell what would you say?**

When I first came here there was sort of a lip service to training. It was do the things we have to do. If there are standards that have to be updated we have to run those out. Try and do some of the soft stuff but that’s of lesser importance. It was never really well done. They would have a budget of roughly half a million bucks a year to spend and they would never spend it. They would always be giving money back at the end of 12 months. They might spend half of that or two thirds of it if they were lucky.

**So regulatory training because it was tick the box.**

Yeah. When I took over the learning and development area that was the attitude of learning development. I had a learning background because my last job was in learning and development. My learning and development manager moved on and I engaged a new
learning and development manager and I brought in a person of the profile that I wanted; somebody who had more of a focus on what was then termed the ‘soft skills’ or what I term ‘business skills’ and she was very supportive and very experienced and well connected with people who could help us with those sorts of visions. Then it was just my influence on the executive team supported by her to be able to push that we needed to roll out something more. The appetite of the CEO himself, the different perspective of the senior management – because there was a change of composition – and now we are over the million dollar mark every year. We spend everything we get on learning. We’re probably going to have to be a bit better with the way we show the direct linkage of the value from what we are spending but there’s never a question that we are spending in the right way. We just give them reports on what we are doing and they are happy about that.

You said before that you can see it in day to day but in actual value terms it’s difficult to determine whether it’s working or not.

It’s really hard. You can’t quantify it because there’s so many variables involved in it. We could say people are happier because our engagement scores and our satisfaction scores in the employee opinion survey is quite high and they’ve grown over the time we’ve done more with the learning and development, but is there a direct nexus between the two?

I’m not necessarily talking about level four or five, if you like – it depends on whether you are a Phillips person or a Kilpatrick person, but just determining whether there is a behaviour change and that sounds like what the feedback you are getting is - that there is a behaviour change. But whether they are actually applying that in the day to day. If it’s transferred to application, that’s the hard thing, and that’s not necessarily measuring ROI because actually I’m not a great proponent of ROI. It’s more a return on expectations that I’m interested in. That feeling of taking the behaviour change – if there is such a thing happened - to the application is the difficult one.

Very difficult.

How do you think you could handle that, or how do you think you could...

That’s a very tough question. There’s some assertions in there as well. At the same time that we are doing all of this more strategic learning, if you like, we’ve also changed the strategic focus of the organisation so the decision making is now more collaborative. We’re getting the next level of managers involved in doing the strategic direction for the organisation and the language that we’re learning and have learnt through all these things that we’re doing through our learning events has come into that strategic planning as well. When we are doing that we’re actually doing it in the same sort of way with the same sort of colour coding, so we can see that that’s actually part of the culture of the organisation changing. Is it making us better? Maybe. We’re getting good results in our employee opinion survey. We’re getting good results from our client survey. Clients are saying that we’re doing things better with them and treating them more like clients than audit subjects as they used to be. We’ve got a client or customer type of perspective on them now and that’s actually broken down from what it used to be that we were the police force going in there to try and catch them doing something wrong. We’re actually going in there
now to try and help them do things better if they can. Is that all due to this, or partially
due to this even? Hard to say. Certainly a lot of it is because of the CEO himself and what
he wants as his legacy from the organisation when he leaves.

Well I guess if you've got an organisation behind you that is supporting you in the
preparation of reports or whatever he's got to present and he's got confidence in
that then he goes to government with a lot more... Firstly he gets respect because of
the results of what he's doing – it is actually a high quality document – but it's more
about his belief in what the organisation is doing and if he sees something that is not
100% or needs some improvement – is that the reason? It's actually about building
the reputation of the organisation, and of course himself in the role that he has. Is
that why you think he has a higher emphasis on training?

There is certainly an amount of that in there. Because he does have this belief that our
continuation as an entity is purely dependant on our contestability. Are we delivering
the value to our clients? If they had to make a decision and they had a range of options would
we be the option that they would pick up? That's where he wants it to be so that in the
future if there is any determination from the board that they wanted to outsource or be
competitive that we would be able to stand on our own two feet. That's his big
determination and the CEO's have a seven year term after which they're finished and they
can't work in the public sector again.

Really?

Yes. It's got to be completely independent. They don't want somebody to spend the last
two years of their team...

Building relationships for the next job. I understand.

He's got a little less than two years now to go in his term and the first couple of years he
was here it was getting his grounding, but for the next few years it's been 'We must be
truly client focused. We must have a good depth of negotiation skills and the ability to sell
ourselves and sell our opinion and not just put it up there as 'This is an expert opinion.
Take it or leave it.’ We have to work with people to understand we can give them some
benefits.’ The leadership within the organisation has been critical to that being a success.
So he's been a great support all the way through. He was the very, very first cab off the
rank to go through all this LSI.

Does the next CEO come from within?

No, but it's a board appointment.

So there is no guarantee that this is going to continue after two years.

Absolutely none. So what we must do in the next two years or however long we have our
CEO is to ensure that it becomes so much part of the culture...

It's embedded.
... that it's embedded. And we do. We believe in it. Organisationally we believe in it. Everybody talks the same language. Everybody thinks that it's a great thing. If we can get it to be an intrinsic part of the organisation it may still be extricated from the organisation – the new CEO may come in and say 'This is all rubbish. We need to go in this direction’ but we believe that the behaviours becoming part of the culture will continue on whether it’s explicitly torn out or not. If they move the focus to something else we will still be able to talk in the red, green and blue language

**So developing the ability to determine whether it works or not, or has worked or not, is probably a fairly high priority in the next two years.**

Yeah. Well our CEO keeps on saying to us ‘We've got to know what the next step is. We’ve done some great thing with this. Is there a next step? Do we go to the next step?’ And there are other things from human synergistics. I’m not saying that they are the be all and end all but we do have the language now and we can take it to an organisational level rather than the individual manager level, or we could take it to an organisational cultural level. And we may do that. We’re looking at doing things like that. But certainly having invested all that time in putting a framework in place gives us options.

**That’s obviously a critical element that you need to investigate but are there any other aspects of the learning culture or organisational culture that you feel...**

The thing for me at the moment is that we have invested a lot into behavioural change within the organisation and behavioural change within the managers and supervisors all the way down. We need to get more of a focus on people developing themselves for their next challenge. We haven't solved the leadership issue. We've gone some way toward doing that but we can't keep feeding everybody with the solutions. They have to be able to invent the solutions for themselves. They have to be able to access things that will help them to invent the solutions for themselves. We need to make sure that learning is part of the culture of the organisation as well and that it's pervasive and it's successful. Our next step is to be able to have blended learning pockets right through the organisation so that if somebody does need to go off to a face to face training event because that’s the best way to learn then fine, we'll set it up for them. But maybe that’s not the best way they learn and maybe that’s not something that they can do because they just don't have the time. They shouldn’t miss out on that learning. We’ve got to be able to present things in different ways and they've got to be able to self-select where they want to be. So it's not all going to just be program training; it's going to be 'Here’s our competencies. Here’s our different roles that we have. Supporting those competencies is some learning events or interventions or whatever of any sort and if you think that you need to learn in that area or you need to develop, or if you aspire to do this, then this is the way that you can get access to some of these things. This is some of the on the job training that you can do to support that. These are the types of clients that you should be working with to get the industry knowledge.’ We want to be able to put all of that there for them to be able to come in and go ‘I can get that. I can do this. I can do that.’

**So like a ‘pay per seat’ type arrangement with eLearning?**

That’s part of it. That will be part of it.
How do you view that? Training is a very important thing to you obviously because it’s what you do, but that’s only one element and coaching or mentoring is another element. Training is not the be all and end all necessarily. How do you manage that when you have someone come to you and they don’t particularly have a performance issue but they just want some development in some area? Is coaching and mentoring and other elements brought into that?

Yes, definitely. We’ve spent a lot of time creating a competency framework for the organisation. We’ve actually had a couple of goes at it and the first time we did it we got too excited and it was the biggest thing you have ever seen. It was unwieldy and unworkable but it got people to understand what a competency actually was because there as great confusion before that. So we have broken it down – competency is very simply an ability to do something and if you are going to have this role or that role there are different competencies and aggregated behaviours and technical skills and personal skills and all other things to allow you to do something. What we now need to do, and what we are now moving to do with those competencies that have been defined and simplified, is to say ‘Pluck that competency out. What are the things that will help somebody to get that competency?’ It’s not just face to face learning. It’s not just eLearning. It could be on the job training. It could be a secondment out to a different agency. It could be going and doing some post graduate work somewhere. It could be setting yourself up on a project and delivering something different. These are the things that we need to put into place to support that. So if someone goes in and says ‘I want to get better at delivering ‘x’ they can assess themselves against where they sit right now ’Do I have all these clubs in my bag to play the game? If I’m missing a couple how do I best get them?’ And not just one way of getting them because I might learn best in a face to face environment, you may learn best being able to do it at your own pace and sitting down with materials that you’ve pulled from a variety of sources. We’ve got to be able to make sure that the best way for somebody to learn...

That’s interesting because one of the new terms that is coming out at the employment in training is ‘integrated learning’ where you actually do take environmental issues into account and learning in conjunction with on the job training. That becomes part of the learning intervention. However Gen Y and Gen X and...

Because they learn differently to how we do.

Exactly right. So it’s a matter of integrating that package and it’s exactly what you just said.

The other thing is using technology as well because technology is going ahead so quickly.

You would agree that there’s not a great deal about adult learning in a lot of eLearning already and certainly in mobile learning there is almost none because they are developed by salespeople or IT professionals rather than adult learning professionals. I think we have to be very careful with technology for technology’s sake and to look savvy.
We don’t want to do that but we do want to have a lot of ‘just in time’ learning rather than ‘just in case’ learning.

That’s an interesting comment.

Because we’ve seen a lot of the time, and particularly when we bring in brand new people like school leavers who are doing their under grads or graduates who are trying to get into the workforce. We bring them in, do an induction, put them through all this stuff and we dip them in the wash and put them out into the workplace. They may not use some of those skills for three, four or five months and then they’ll go ‘Oh yeah, I did something with that.’ They've had skills atrophy. We need to make sure that when they need to have the learning they can get at it. So being able to access it through a learning management system or being able to access it on their phone – everyone has got an iPhone now. I don’t, but everyone has got an iPhone and that's how they touch the world. So if they are out on a client’s site going ‘Oh, I remember I did something with that’ then pull it up and maybe go through a bit of experience work with it and bang ‘Yes, I've got it. I can apply it.’

Have you thought about or used industry based learning programs with any alliances with universities?

Not at the moment. We are looking at what we can do with some institutions. Most of our people are degree qualified. But we have to do a lot more with the universities. I am actually doing a Masters at the moment myself - that won’t go on record – and I am seeing the difficulty in actually juggling a full time job and trying to do a fairly accelerated course through distance learning.

That’s the hard way.

It’s not easy. I can understand how these kids are struggling. I’m deviating a little bit here but we get undergraduates who come into the organisation and we put them through the undergraduate degree and typically they should take about six years to do it – three years face course and working at the same time so we give them six years to do it. Unfortunately our award is structured that it encourages them to do it in four years so a few of these kids are pushing themselves to work and do their degree in four years so that they can get to the next step up the ladder. We’re killing them. We are now starting to see – because our workload has actually gone up as well – for the first time kids in the second or third year leaving to go back to full time study. So we’ve got to change the way we do that as well.

Well we might leave it there.

Okay.

END OF TRANSCRIPT