

• PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES •

A philosophical framework for thought and practice in human resource development

Wendy E.A. Ruona
University of Georgia

Susan A. Lynham
Texas A&M University

Abstract: Philosophy is often thought of as abstract and offering little practical utility. However, it is vitally important for an emerging profession such as HRD. The goal of this paper is to highlight the importance of the *act* of philosophy by offering a primer for those new to it. A framework that emphasizes a systems perspective of philosophy is proposed and each component is briefly described. Then, the practical contributions of philosophy are demonstrated by examining current issues facing HRD.

Keywords: philosophy, thought and practice, reflective practice, systems perspective

Introduction

Although often thought of as a discipline of abstract thought with little practical utility, philosophy can play a very useful and purposeful role in HRD. Before progressing further, think about the following scenarios:

A CEO at ACME organization calls in the HRD professional and announces that ACME must be more proactive around issues of diversity. He requests that the HRD professional immediately begin to implement interventions that will address this problem. The HRD person accepts the assignment and begins his work. In the next six months, he creates policies and procedures on diversity and sensitivity, works with HR to set quotas for recruitment and hiring and to implement new HR policies and mandates sensitivity training for all management.

At XYZ Inc. across town, a CEO calls in the organizational HRD professional with much the same request. This person, however, requests sessions with the key leaders of the business to come to a better understanding of what diversity means to this company and to clarify their business and moral motivations for pursuing interventions related to diversity. Six months later, the company has begun a set of co-ordinated interventions related to building and maximizing community at the organization. The focus is on valuing diverse contributions and eliminating barriers that hinder individuals in achieving their goals. There are very few new policies set, no quotas mandated and the training and OD efforts emphasize integration and optimization of diversity.

These HRD professionals both faced the same presenting problem. They were charged with addressing diversity practices at the organizations in which they worked. However, the resulting interventions differed greatly. Why is this? Some analysts might conclude that the differences had to do with the competence of the HRD professional, differing company cultures or the desires of top leadership. Although these certainly all impact on the outcomes, it is also very important to acknowledge that each of these two HRD professionals brought fundamentally different philosophies to their work. If we had been able to interview them, we might have discovered that the HRD person at ACME and the person at the XYZ Inc. differed greatly in some of their basic assumptions about diversity. Table 1 outlines a few assumptions we potentially may have found.

The beliefs that each HRD professional brought to their work impacted fundamentally on the shape and qualities of the interventions that followed. These beliefs affected how they were able to think about and evaluate issues related to diversity, how they assessed needs in the organization and their actions in the organization. In addition, if an HRD researcher had been investigating these interventions, the way in which these were studied would have been influenced by his/her beliefs and the findings would have also been quite different between the organizations.

Now, this example may feel a bit exaggerated to you; however, this is what each of us does every day. Our views of the world are constructed in a variety of ways and how one views the world impacts on all else that flows from that view. This is certainly not ‘new’ news. Senge (1990) alerted us to the ‘iceberg nature’ of deep structural issues and how these structures change the shape of what is seen and done. In this sense too, assumptions and beliefs about the world and knowledge change the nature of what we see, know and do in HRD. Yet, many past conversations in HRD have been largely about what would be the metaphorical ‘top’ of the iceberg. Until we look beneath the action of practice and research/inquiry in HRD, we will be unable to tend to fundamental issues and challenges facing our field.

Table 1 Examples of beliefs of two HRD professionals

<i>Beliefs/assumptions</i>	<i>HRD professional at ACME</i>	<i>HRD professional at XYZ Inc.</i>
What is diversity?	● A problem to be solved and managed. ● Not an enhancer of business performance.	● An opportunity to reflect on community and create in new ways. ● An issue of human differences inherent in business that enhances a business’s competitive position.
Differences	● Should be minimized so people can work together better and easier.	● Should be maximized for optimal performance.
Conformity	● Conformity to a ‘majority’ view is good.	● There are multiple worldviews and ways of doing things and these should be fostered.

Purpose

The purpose of this article is to provide a focus for new conversations – to re-stimulate discussion of philosophy underlying HRD practice, research and theory building. A simple framework, which emphasizes a systems perspective of philosophy, is proposed and each component is briefly described. Next, the importance of philosophy is discussed at two levels: first, generically in terms of what philosophy, as an activity, offers; then, more specifically, as a framework to elucidate how current issues facing and being dealt with in HRD, both practical and theoretical, fit into a broader philosophical context.

Philosophy is a complex and conceptually dense topic, and is worthy of significant study. At the same time, it is important to recognize that philosophical issues inform and impact on our everyday lives. The ensuing framework, albeit a simplification of philosophy, is offered as a way of bringing attention to the need for researchers and practitioners in applied fields, like that of HRD, to give pause to their deeper philosophical orientations, and how these often implicit orientations inform their inquiry into and practice in the real world. In a world and profession dominated by results and outcomes, philosophy has tended to be seen as the business of philosophers, with little attention from others. However, philosophy also has a very practical purpose and intent, and it is to this utility of philosophy that we endeavour to speak in this paper. As with most issues, we acknowledge that the view presented in this paper is itself a philosophical orientation as it presents a utilitarian orientation to the essence and intent of philosophy and its usefulness in the world in which we work and live.

What is philosophy?

The word ‘philosophy’ is a word of Greek derivation meaning ‘the love of wisdom’ (Cavalier 1990: 2). A traditional view of philosophy is that it is the field of ideas and thinking about life and everything in it. This seems a bit lofty for many who must cope with practical problems on a daily basis. However, philosophy is generally concerned with three basic issues: being (ontology), knowing (epistemology) and acting (axiology) (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). Through these focuses philosophers are interested in answering the following three questions: (1) what is real? (a question of ontology), (2) what is true? (a question of epistemology) and (3) what is good? (a question of axiology).

If one thinks about these focuses as separate areas of inquiry, then philosophy does not seem to serve much purpose. However, in actuality, these three areas all work together to make up a philosophical system of thought and practice. In this sense, from a systems perspective, the whole is more than the sum of its parts. A revival of philosophy as a highly practical activity hinges on our capacity to view it as a set of interacting components which, when viewed as a whole, have properties that do not exist within any of the smaller units (Heylighten and Joslyn 1992). Systems theory, which has been advocated as a foundational discipline by many in HRD (Ruona 1998; Swanson 1998; Swanson and Holton 2001; Willis 1997; Gradous 1989),

reminds us to view the multiple tiers and relationships that exist between these components of philosophy.

A system of interacting components of thought and practice

To get a sense of the potential utility of philosophy one needs to consider philosophy as a system of thought and action (Bohm 1994); that is, as an activity or process of inquiry that is concerned with disciplined reflection, ways of thinking about certain questions, interpreting things, trying out ideas and thinking of possible arguments for and against them, and wondering about how concepts really work in action.

We therefore see the critical components of a philosophical framework for HRD as consisting of three key components:

- 1 *Ontology*: the component that makes a view of the nature of the world and nature of phenomena of interest to HRD explicit (i.e. how we *see* the world)
- 2 *Epistemology*: the component that makes the nature of knowledge in HRD, and the necessary and sufficient requirements to hold and claim knowledge in our field, explicit (i.e. how we come to *know and think* about the world)
- 3 *Axiology*: the component that makes explicit how we ought to act, individually as well as communally, in our field. This component outlines espoused aims, ideals and proper methodologies and methods for HRD inquiry and practice (i.e. how we should *act* in theorizing, researching about and practising in our world).

These three components interact in a dynamic, multi-virtuous and systemic way, together forming a guiding framework for a congruent and coherent system of thought and action. Figure 1 shows the interactive and dynamic relationship among the key components integral to a sound, but simple, philosophical framework. It elucidates the connections – demonstrating that how we *see* the world shapes and directs how we *think* about the world; that how we *think* about the world shapes and directs how we *act* in the world; and that how we *act* in the world, in turn, reflects and influences how we *think* about and consequently *see* the world. Each of these components interacts with and influences the other, in a continuous cycle of integrated beliefs, thoughts and practices. These become our assumptions or frames/models which we bring to the world and which help us to make sense of it.

Of course philosophies are individually held. Commonly, however, philosophies can also be shared. History is characterized by phases where different prominent philosophies influenced current conditions, actions and events. In education, for example, the philosophical schools of thought forwarded by Dewey and Snedden are consistently contrasted and analysed for their varied impacts on schools in America. In business, for example, Taylor's scientific management philosophy is being replaced by more organic views of how organizations function and disciplines like HRD are helping organizations cope with the far-reaching implications of this change. Philosophies can also be shared in professions, as evidenced by attention to occupational cultures during the past ten years (Trice and Beyer 1993). It is our presupposition that HRD must begin to identify its own philosophies as a community of professionals (Hansen *et al.* 1994) engaged in 'improving individual and organizational performance through learning' (AHRD 1998).

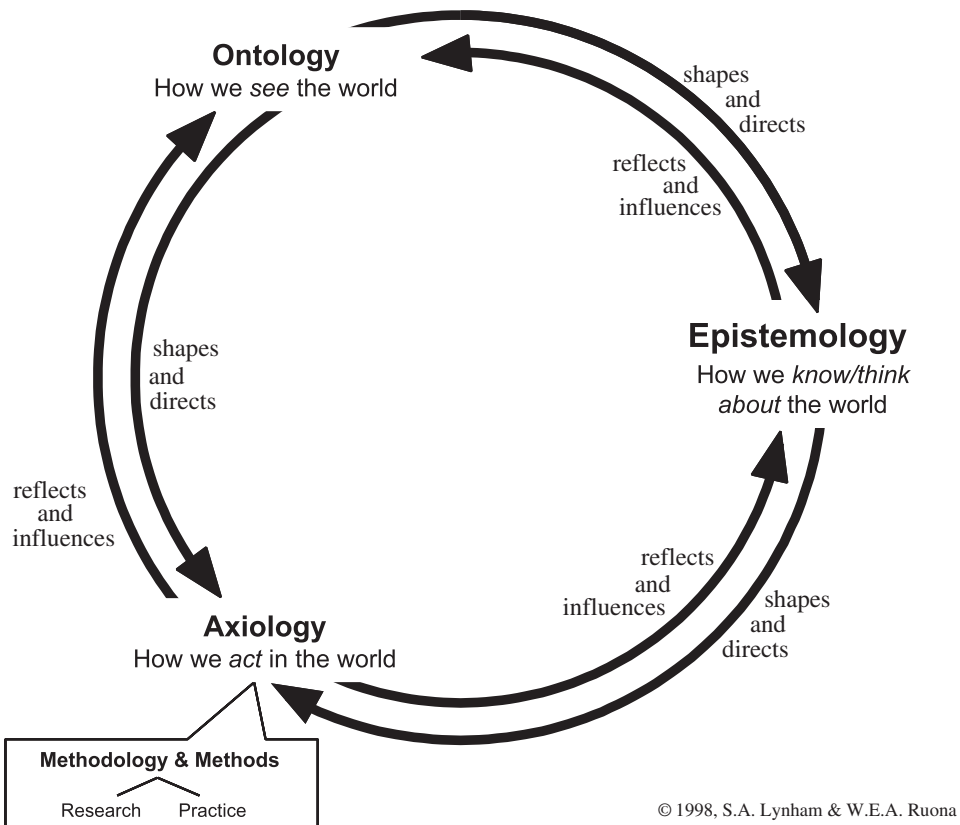


Figure 1 A philosophical framework for thought and practice

Core components of philosophy

The next section briefly overviews each component of the philosophical framework presented in Figure 1. The purpose of this overview is to offer a common basis of understanding and a simple platform for discussing the utility of each component in HRD.

What is ontology?

Ontology is concerned with fundamental assumptions about the nature of phenomena (Gioia and Pitre 1990). It focuses on basic questions and assumptions about the nature of reality – questions like:

- What is real?
- What is ‘there’ and what do we mean by ‘there’?
- What is the world made of?
- Is reality ordered in any way?
- Is reality ‘out there’ or ‘inside us’ or a combination of both?
- What are humans?

Kuhn (1970) also introduced another way of thinking about ontology in his notion of a paradigm. A paradigm is a worldview, or a way of thinking that reflects fundamental beliefs and assumptions about the nature of phenomena. An ontology, ultimately, is how one *sees and views* the world and reality.

Mapping the ontology of a field involves making explicit the common understandings, beliefs and assumptions of how those in the field see the world, of how they perceive the essences of reality and phenomena that constitute the field's concern and focus. At the risk of oversimplification, ontology is about identifying and articulating the core assumptions about reality that drive the thought and practice of a field.

What is epistemology?

Gioia and Pitre describe epistemology as 'fundamental assumptions about the nature of knowledge about phenomena' (1990: 585). Epistemology (also described as theory of knowledge) is the component of philosophy that raises questions about the nature of knowledge and reasonable belief. In so doing, it addresses the following kinds of questions:

- What is knowledge?
- How does knowledge differ from mere opinion or belief?
- How is knowledge acquired?
- When is a belief justified or reasonable?

One view of the essences of epistemology is the Socratic, tripartite equation of knowledge which states that: *knowledge = true, justified belief* (Pojman 1995). According to this conception of epistemology, it is therefore concerned with not only the nature of knowledge, but also examines the necessary and sufficient conditions required for these components of knowledge. That is, what is necessary and sufficient not only for knowledge, but for *truth* and *justified belief* (Root 1997). Epistemology is about how we *know* and *think* about the world.

Examining the epistemology of HRD involves articulating the common assumptions, thoughts and understanding of what makes for knowledge of and about phenomena in HRD. It also informs the necessary and sufficient standards for knowledge in HRD. It therefore serves a purpose of both clarification of the nature of knowledge and standards for 'good' knowledge in a field.

What is axiology?

Axiology (sometimes referred to as ethics), a third component of philosophy, is concerned with action. It is normative, speaking to issues of ethics, what is good and what ought to be done. In other words, it indicates how one should *act* in inquiry and practice, and the extent to which this action should be, and is, congruent with ontological and epistemological aims and ideals.

Axiology urges congruence between the ontological and epistemological assumptions and the espoused actions of a field. Thus, axiology is useful in that it plays an important role in putting the standards and requirements of acceptable

methodology and methods for research and practice in HRD in place. Making the axiology explicit helps to set and clarify the guiding tone and rigour for action in HRD. It helps to define desired standards for methodology and methods in both research and practice.

What are methodology and methods? The concept of axiology is broad and includes quite a few elements, making its boundaries difficult to specify. However, two important elements of axiology are methodology and methods. Methodology is defined as the system that influences the way things are done – that is, how we choose and use methods, conceptualize phenomena, analyse and collect data, and design interventions. Methods, on the other hand, are means and manners of procedure.

Due to the applied nature of HRD, methodologies and methods need to be considered in the context of both research and practice. Methodologies in research inform us of ways of studying phenomena (Gioia and Pitre 1990) while methodologies in practice inform us of ways of carrying out interventions in HRD. Methods in each domain expand the methodologies by offering tools, techniques and procedures for inquiry and practice. See Table 2 for some examples of how methodologies and methods are connected.

Specifying methodology and methods for conducting research and practice enables us to make research and practice in HRD rigorous. This rigour demands that we judge research and practice against desired standards that are inherent in axiology and, in turn, reflective of epistemological and ontological orientations. Given the rising concern about increasing atheoretical practice (Swanson and Holton 1997), non-scientific research and impractical theory in HRD (Lynham 2000, 2002), a framework and set of criteria for judging the utility of research and theory and the soundness of practice would seem to be both welcome and useful.

Table 2 Two important elements of axiology

	<i>Methodology</i>	<i>Methods</i>
Research	Positivistic	● Experimental ● Quasi-experimental ● Survey
	Interpretive	● Phenomenology ● Case study ● Etc.
	Critical science	● Critical theory ● Feminist theory ● Etc.
Practice	Appreciative inquiry	● Affirmative topic choice ● Positive questioning ● Etc.
	Action research	● Problem identification processes ● Feedback methods ● Action planning ● Etc.

Why is philosophy important?

A philosophy professor once advised his students that they should not even use the word ‘philosophy’ – but, rather, ‘just do it!’ This wisdom encapsulates the essence of philosophy. It is an act – an active process that ‘involves thinking about questions, making interpretations, trying out ideas and thinking of possible arguments for and against them, and wondering how concepts really work’ (Ruona 2000: 4). It is a field of study, but more importantly it is a mode of thinking and offers a framework for thinking (Paul 1993).

Philosophy helps develop capacities for thinking (Honderich 1995) and can improve the alignment between what we think and what we do. At the heart of it, philosophy is a systematic examination of the assumptions and common wisdoms (Root 1993) that underlie thought and action. In this way, philosophy is akin to an individual’s theories of action (Argyris and Schön 1974) or mental models which are ‘deeply held internal images of how the world works’ (Senge 1990: 174). Personal philosophies (or theories of action) can be investigated and analysed to surface the thoughts and ideas that, ultimately, drive actions.

Magee tells us that ‘one of the tasks of philosophy is mapping the logic of . . . discourse, laying it out, so to speak, so that a person can make his way about it successfully’ (1971: 45). In fulfilling this logic-mapping, philosophy can be viewed as affording practice in critical thinking which can be defined as ‘the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action’ (Scriven and Paul 2003). Examples of this include building counter-arguments to common wisdoms (Root 1993) and developing examples for questionable generalizations. It also develops responsiveness to concrete cases and an appreciation of the thinking expressed in these cases. Finally, it enables interpretation and theorizing, for example, by relating positions of one area of inquiry to those in another.

Philosophy thus provides us with (1) practical ways of thinking about certain types of questions (questions of the nature of reality, truth and ethics) and (2) the use of logical argument, disciplined reflection and theoretical reasoning through the invoking of this process of continual questioning. It helps us develop skills to think critically about things concerning the nature of the world, justification of beliefs and the conduct of life. Philosophy engages us in the interpretation of texts and the criticisms of common wisdoms that are often taken for granted.

Implications for HRD

There is certainly utility for HRD in each of the philosophical components described above. In addition, philosophy offers a context in which to view current issues being dealt with in HRD. HRD professionals (whether practitioners or professional researchers) can use philosophy to affect three distinctive areas: (1) practice, (2) research and theory building and (3) the evolution of HRD.

Implications for individual practice of HRD

Reflection about philosophy (ontology, epistemology and axiology) ensures that as practitioners we are leading, in Plato's words, an 'examined life', acknowledging that beliefs about basic ends and principles lead to concrete conclusions and action. This process can be done unconsciously, where it is subject to many hazards. Or, it can be done consciously, where one (or an entire field) strives for clarification and alignment among her/his beliefs, thoughts and practices. This is not to say that this clarification process is ever finished – it is a continuous process where 'new light is always dawning on meaning of concepts at every level, with the consequence that the whole enterprise has to be forever examined' (Magee 1971: 47). However, striving for the identification of perspectives and assumptions about each of the three philosophical components and, then, being grounded in those articulated by the alternative schools of thought within the discipline of HRD will undoubtedly result in better practice that is more soundly aligned with espoused beliefs. This is especially relevant in HRD – an applied field that has traditionally been driven by its practice where the sharing of rigorous research often lags behind the challenges being faced in organizations. Philosophy provides some structure on which to make decisions when research is not there to support a practice or policy. Magee identifies the importance of philosophy to complement science when he explains:

Conclusions about what to do are a mixture of judgments about the 'excellencies to be produced' combined with empirical or scientific knowledge about how to produce them. It is important to notice that we cannot derive the list of prescriptions, excellencies that are a set of value judgments about what to do, from the descriptive, empirical, knowledge accounts of what the facts usually are. It is, in short, not possible to go directly from scientific understanding to policy and practice. Practice is always a combination of prescriptive convictions and descriptive understanding.

(Magee 1971: 46)

Philosophy allows us to engage in thinking that is at once disciplined and imaginatively creative. We are able to apply philosophical methods to practical problems and ascertain what the issues are and how different assumptions affect the problem. In addition, we can use philosophy to analyse and interpret practice. In these ways the idealism of philosophy can be used to improve how we address practical problems. The act of philosophy cultivates the capacity and appetite for reflection, for exchange and debate of ideas, for life-long learning and for dealing with problems for which there are no easy answers.

Implications for research and theory building within the profession of HRD

Many discussions of research and theory building have taken place in a vacuum concerned with only science and methods or the 'how to' of generating new knowledge. Traditionally, scholars agreed that there were two primary ways of doing research (quantitatively and qualitatively) and have urged people in the field to get on with the business of research.

However, we are now coming to understand more deeply how vitally important it is to place knowledge generation in a philosophical framework – to put it in its place,

as it were, and strive to understand how it is connected with how we see, think about and act in the world. How we see the world and what we even recognize as 'knowledge' in HRD fundamentally affect the methodologies we employ to research and build theory (Burrell and Morgan 1979; Kuhn 1970; Lynham and Swanson 2002). Philosophy ultimately requires us to consider what knowledge and theory really are. When placed within a context of assumptions about reality and nature our current views of these things may or may not change. Marsick states:

If we are to describe accurately and explain the world we research, then, as we work we must test our assumptions about what we view as knowledge, whether our view is compatible with the nature of organizations and the phenomena we are researching, and how we believe we should go about researching these phenomena.

(Marsick 1990: 33)

It is important to acknowledge how science and philosophy complement one another and proceed on a journey that demands rigorous work in both areas. Philosophy is not more or less important than science, it is just different. While science tells us what the world contains, philosophy asks about different ways to perceive and classify the world. While science produces knowledge, philosophy asks what we can know and how. While science provides new knowledge of the observable or based on experimental tests, philosophy suggests 'rules' for the 'stuff' of reality and how it might be organized. Philosophy looks behind science and analyses concepts/notions and methods that are used, and why they are used. It pushes a discipline such as HRD to strive for research that is both rigorous and relevant (Marsick 1990; Van de Ven 1989). In this way, philosophy can be used to suggest important standards of rigour for research and theory building that have yet to be considered. An excellent example of this is Turnbull's (2002) discussion of social construction research and theory building, which helps to make the assumptions of social constructionist theorists explicit and discusses the implications of those assumptions for HRD scholars.

Implications for the evolution of HRD

Philosophy also plays an important role in the evolution and future of HRD. HRD continues to deal with perennial issues that threaten its stability and future effectiveness. Warren Topp (1998) introduced these authors to the concept of a 'conversation having us' – that is, of a conversation that is ongoing and becomes the prominent focus such that little else actually happens except the having of the conversation (Bohm 1994). In the context of these 'stuck' conversations, very few new thoughts are generated, positions are defended, tradition weighs heavy and very little progress is made in understanding and creating new meaning. Some would say that HRD is currently engaged in a few of these kinds of conversations.

One such issue is whether HRD can and should be defined. An entire issue of *Human Resource Development International* (4(3)) was devoted to this issue. Recently, a vocal perspective has emerged that emphasizes the breadth, diversity (McLean and McLean 2001), multidisciplinary (McGoldrick *et al.* 2001) and indefinability (Lee 2001; Mankin 2001) of the field. Yet there have been over twenty definitions of HRD forwarded since 1970 (see Weinberger 1998) and there are many

calls for some level of definition in the field (Ruona 2001; Kuchinke 2000). Philosophy can be useful in addressing this issue because it can help professionals and communities within HRD to surface and articulate their own coherent ideas about the aims of their work and the assumptions that lead them to their desired outcome(s). These systems of thought and action must each be conceptually sound and then held up to rigorous standards of consistency. Holton's (2000) effort to clarify and define the performance paradigm of HRD is an excellent example of just this kind of process. Sambrook's (2000) identification of three ways of thinking about HRD in today's organizations also is representative of this kind of thinking. These efforts help others in HRD compare and contrast their beliefs to know where they individually stand. It also helps communities within HRD to form and to understand how they are similar to and different from each other.

Another issue that demonstrates a 'conversation having us' is the purpose of HRD, which has been heavily discussed during the last ten years. Philosophy can provide a framework for articulating the purpose(s) of the field and moving past the conversations having us. Instead, we need to have the conversations – and the only way this will happen is if we really begin to explore the deep assumptions that drive our field. It is at this assumptive level that generative conversations take place and real change begins (Topp 1998; Bohm 1994). Surfacing and clarifying key assumptions, about ontology in particular, provides a set of criteria to guide future discussions of what is and is not HRD. As has been demonstrated in the learning versus performance debate, we can analyse different schools of thought emerging in HRD to see where they come together and where they do not (Swanson and Holton 2001). Philosophy can be a rigorous backdrop for the community of HRD professionals to judge whether and to what extent the field can accommodate multiple definitions and purposes. This same set of criteria can also be used to balance the long- and short-term interests of HRD – helping us to do both for the optimization of the field. Philosophy can be an important mechanism to guide the nature of conversations that need continually to be held in HRD. This will ensure that HRD grows well, and deeply.

Another issue that is increasingly being discussed is professionalization in HRD. The focus of a 1998 AHRD symposium, the issue is multi-faceted and controversial. One of the emerging dilemmas is what any kind of credentialing or certification would be based on. Reflection, theory building (Hansen 1998; Mott 1998; Lynham 2000), research and competencies have been suggested as possible bases, while others have suggested bases that are more philosophically grounded. Ellinger (1998) and Watkins (1990) have both advocated an integration of vision and values. Chalofsky (1996) suggested that the profession's core must include philosophy and mission, theory and concepts, and roles and competencies. It is presently unclear where this conversation will lead and how it will impact on the future of the field. However, it is clear that philosophy and the above-proposed framework for thought and practice in HRD can be useful.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to provide a focus for new conversations – to re-stimulate the importance of the discussion of philosophy underlying HRD theory,

Peer-Reviewed Articles

research and practice. It offered a practical framework in which to think of philosophy more systemically and demonstrated the potential impact that philosophy can have in, and on, HRD. In closing, we are reminded that, during the first century of science, many great scientists considered themselves to be revivers or rediscoverers of knowledge. We invite you to join their ranks and revive philosophy as an important tool in which to couch paradigmatic and methodological progress in HRD.

Address for correspondence

Wendy E.A. Ruona, Ph.D.
University of Georgia
Department of Occupational Studies
213 River's Crossing
850 College Station Road
Athens, GA 30602
Tel: (706) 542-4474
Fax: (706) 542-4054
E-mail: wruona@uga.edu

References

- AHRD (1998) *What Is Human Resource Development?* (online). Available: <http://www.ahrd.org/profession.html>.
- Argyris, C. and Schön, D. A. (1974) *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Bohm, D. (1994) *Thought as a System*, New York: Routledge.
- Burrell, G. and Morgan, G. (1979) *Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis*, London: Heinemann.
- Cavalier, R. (1990) *Plato for Beginners*, New York: Writers & Readers.
- Chalofsky, H. (1996) 'Professionalization comes from theory and research: the why instead of the how to', *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 72: 51–6.
- Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (2000) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd edn, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ellinger, A. D. (1998) 'Credentialing in the workplace: human resource development practitioners should strive for certification', in R. J. Torraco (ed.) *Academy of Human Resource Development*, Baton Rouge, LA: AHRD, pp. 677–84.
- Gioia, D. A. and Pitre, E. (1990) 'Multiparadigm perspectives on theory building', *Academy of Management Review*, 15(1): 584–602.
- Gradous, D. B. (ed.) (1989) *Systems Theory Applied to Human Resource Development*, Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training and Development.
- Hansen, C. D. (1998) 'HRD theory building through qualitative research', in E. F. Holton, III (ed.) *Academy of Human Resource Development*, Baton Rouge, LA: AHRD, pp. 281–4.

- Hansen, C. D., Kahnweiler, W. M. and Wilensky, A. S. (1994) 'Human resource development as an occupational culture through organizational stories', *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 5(3): 253–67.
- Heylighen, F. and Joslyn, C. (1992) *What Is Systems Theory?* (online). Available: <http://www.pespmc1.vub.ac.be/systheor.html> (21 October 1997).
- Holton, E. F. (2002) 'Theoretical assumptions underlying the performance paradigm of human resource development', *Human Resource Development International*, 5(2): 199–216.
- Honderich, T. (ed.) (1995) *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kuchinke, K. P. (2000) 'Debates over the nature of HRD: an institutional theory perspective', *Human Resource Development International*, 3(3): 279–83.
- Kuhn, T. S. (1970) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd edn, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lee, M. (2001) 'A refusal to define HRD', *Human Resource Development International*, 4(3): 327–41.
- Lynham, S. A. (2000) 'Theory building in the human resource development profession', *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 11(2): 159–78.
- Lynham, S. A. (2002) 'The general method of theory-building research in applied disciplines', *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 4(3): 221–41.
- Lynham, S. A. and Swanson, R. A. (2002) *Theory Building in Applied Disciplines, Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 4(3), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- McLean, G. N. and McLean, L. (2001) 'If we can't define HRD in one country, how can we define it in an international context?', *Human Resource Development International*, 4(3): 313–26.
- McGoldrick, J., Stewart, J. and Watson, S. (2001) 'Theorizing human resource development', *Human Resource Development International*, 4(3): 343–56.
- Magee, J. B. (1971) *Philosophical Analysis in Education*, New York: Harper & Row.
- Mankin, N. (2001) 'A Model for human resource development', *Human Resource Development International*, 4(1): 66–85.
- Marsick, V. J. (1990) 'Altering the paradigm for theory-building in human resource development', *Human Resource Development*, 1(1): 5–24, 29–33.
- Mott, V. W. (1998) 'Professionalization and reflective theory building in HRD', in E. F. Holton, III (ed.) *Academy of Human Resource Development*, Baton Rouge, LA: AHRD, pp. 671–76.
- Paul, R. (1993) *Critical Thinking*, Santa Rosa, CA: Foundation for Critical Thinking.
- Pojman, L. P. (1995) *What Can We Know? An Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*, New York: Wadsworth.
- Root, M. (1993) *Philosophy of Social Science*, Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Root, M. (1997) Class notes from epistemology class.
- Ruona, W. E. A. (1998) 'Systems theory as a foundation of HRD', in R. J. Torraco (ed.) *Academy of Human Resource Development*, Baton Rouge, LA: AHRD, pp. 888–96.
- Ruona, W. E. A. (2000) 'Core beliefs in human resource development: a journey for the profession and its professionals', in W. E. A. Ruona and G. Roth (eds) *Philosophical Foundations of Human Resource Development Practice*, Vol. 7, San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler, pp. 1–27.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

- Ruona, W. E. A. (2001) 'What's in a name? Human resource development and its core', in T. Egan and S. A. Lynham (eds) *Proceedings of the 2002 Academy of Human Resource Development Annual Conference*, Bowling Green, OH: Academy of Human Resource Development, pp. 9–16.
- Sambrook, S. (2000) 'Talking of HRD', *Human Resource Development International*, 3(2): 159–78.
- Scriven, M. and Paul, R. (2003) 'Defining critical thinking'. Retrieved 23 April 2003 from the Center for Critical Thinking Web site: <http://www.criticalthinking.org/university/univclass/defining.html>
- Senge, P. M. (1990) *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, New York: Doubleday-Currency.
- Swanson, R. A. (1998) 'The discipline of human resource development', in R. J. Torraco (ed.) *Academy of Human Resource Development*, Baton Rouge, LA: AHRD, pp. 880–7.
- Swanson, R. A. and Holton, E. F. (1997) *Human Resource Development Research Handbook: Linking Research and Practice*, San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- Swanson, R. A. and Holton, E. F. (2001) *Foundations of Human Resource Development*, San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- Topp, W. (1998) Personal communication.
- Trice, H. and Beyer, J. (1993) *The Culture of Work Organizations*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Turnbull, S. (2002) 'Social construction research and theory building', *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 4(3): 317–34.
- Van de Ven, A. H. (1989) 'Nothing is quite so practical as theory', *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4): 486–90.
- Watkins, K. (1990) 'A common body of knowledge is nonsense in a field in search of itself', *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 1(2): 181–5.
- Weinberger, L. (1998) 'Commonly held theories of human resource development', *Human Resource Development International*, 1(1): 75–93.
- Willis, V. (1997) 'HRD as evolutionary system: from pyramid-building to space-walking and beyond', in R. J. Torraco (ed.) *1997 Conference Proceedings*, Austin, TX: Academy of Human Resource Development, pp. 660–7.

Copyright of Human Resource Development International is the property of Routledge, Ltd. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.