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ABSTRACT

This document contains summaries of the presentations and discussions that were part of a conference on human resource development (HRD) research and practice across Europe that focused on the theme of creativity and innovation in learning. The document begins with summaries of the following presentations: "Introduction" (Jim Stewart); "HRD Models in the United States" (Gary McLean); "Defining HRD in an International Context"; and "Perspectives of HRD in Europe" (Joseph Kessels). Presented next are a summary of the discussion "An Overriding Model of HRD?" in which Joseph Kessels, Monica Lee, Graem Martin, Gary McLean, and other unnamed individuals participated, plus a summary of the discussion "Making Progress with HRD in an Academic Environment," in which Joseph Kessels and Gene Roth took part. A summary of the presentation "Conclusion" (Jim Stewart) is followed by summaries of the following related contributions: "Comparing National Systems of HRD" (Peter Kuchinke); "HRD in Europe at the Crossroads" (Barry Nyhan); and "HRD Agenda in Europe" (Jean Woodall et al.). Each summary includes some of all of the following elements: a statement of the subject; a statement of the presentation's context; an outline of the main points made in the presentation or discussion; a list of key terms; a source; and descriptors. (MN)

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HRD Practice: A Comparison of European and U.S. Models

Third conference on human resource development research
and practice across Europe: Creativity and innovation in learning

Supported by the University Forum for HRD, EURESFORM and
the Academy of HRD. Hosted by Napier University,
Edinburgh and University of Abertay, Dundee.

Edinburgh, 25-26 January 2002

Sabine Manning, Editor

Highlight

 **HRD practice: A comparison of European and US models**

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Conference

Third conference on human resource development research and practice across Europe: Creativity and innovation in learning

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Session

HRD practice: A comparison of European and US models

Session in collaboration with the EHRD Network
 Chair: Jim Stewart
 Proceedings (rapporteur: Sabine Manning)

- Jim Stewart: **Introduction**
- Gary McLean: **HRD models in the United States**
- Joseph Kessels: **Perspectives of HRD in Europe**
- Discussion:
 - > **An overriding model of HRD?**
 - > **Making progress with HRD in an academic environment**
- Jim Stewart: **Conclusion**

Related contributions

- Peter Kuchinke: **Comparing national systems of HRD** (presentation)
- Barry Nyhan: **HRD in Europe at the crossroads** (summary and discussion)
- Jean Woodall et al.: **HRD agenda in Europe** (summary)

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Subject **Introduction** (Jim Stewart)

Outline Welcome to this the final substantive session of the conference and congratulations on staying the course. The session addresses the important and topical subject of variations in American and European models of HRD. This to some extent assumes that there can or might be such a thing as a single European model of HRD, and indeed the same assumption is being applied to the USA in the theme of the session. Whether we can talk sensibly about a single European model of HRD has provided a topic of research for many of the EC funded projects which provide a major focus for the EHRD Base project. Some of those have and are also addressing directly the comparison with alternative models such as what might be termed the American model of HRD. But, we don't know whether it is possible or sensible to talk of a single American model either! The session then is timely in addressing these difficult questions which, as well as being of interest to European researchers in their EC funded projects, are also of interest to members of both UFHRD and AHRD.

We are fortunate to have two very distinguished speakers with us to stimulate our discussions. I want to welcome and thank first Professor Gary Mclean from the University of Minnesota, who is also President of the AHRD. Gary is well known to HRD academics and practitioners across the world as one of the leading thinkers, researchers and writers in the field of HRD, and I am very grateful to him for agreeing to speak at this session. Second, I want to welcome Professor Joseph Kessels from the University of Twente in the Netherlands. A special thank you is due to Joseph as he has stepped in at the last minute to replace Professor Jim McGoldrick, who unfortunately had to withdraw from the conference because of urgent and unexpected circumstances. Professor Kessels too is well known across Europe and in the USA for his original thinking on HRD, and I know from personal experience that, whatever he has to say, it will be both thoughtful and thought provoking.

The session is intended to be participative and to stimulate discussion. The format therefore will be that Professor McLean will speak for about 15 minutes on US models of HRD. I will take questions at the end to amplify or clarify any of his points. We will then hear from Professor Kessels for the same amount of time on European models, again followed by a short time for questions. After hearing from both speakers, it will then be an open debate rather than a question and answer session. So, I would now like to invite Gary to begin the session.

Source Transcript of the author; recording of the session 'HRD Practice: A comparison of European and US models' held at the HRD conference in Edinburgh, January 2002 (see [proceedings](#)).

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Subject

HRD models in the United States (Gary McLean)

Outline

What I have chosen to do is to share with you some of the optional models that predominate in the US academic environment.

Certainly in the US the model that predominated early, back in the 60s, was Len Nadler's model. It's a model you don't hear talk about too much today although you see it emerging in subtle ways as conversation goes on about HRD. Nadler's model started with training and differentiated training from education and development. So training was seen as preparation immediately for the job, education was seen as preparation for a job some time in the future, and development had more of an individual focus whereby the individual is developing himself or herself, which may or may not have implications for the organisation. This is a model that has migrated around the world. Because Nadler spent considerable time in Thailand, for example, it is a model that is still widely used there.

Clearly the predominant model in HRD in the US and, as Laird and I found in our research on HRD definitions internationally, around the world, in spite of all the criticisms about it, is Patricia McLagan's work that started in 1984 through the American Society for Training and Development. It was later updated and became more comprehensive in the 1989 work that resulted in definitions and professional roles for HRD. Probably most widely used even today is the HR Wheel she introduced, identifying eleven different components of human resources. These include three areas that have the word development in them and, therefore, are regarded as HRD: training and development, organisation development, and career development. Four areas are seen as exclusively HRM, and four areas are considered as the overlap between HRD and HRM. It's a model that probably has been most significant in influencing the development of academic programmes in the US. So it is very common to find an HRD programme that has course work in each of the three areas, much less common to find course work in the overlap areas, and uncommon to find anything in the areas that are identified only as HRM.

There are huge problems with the research that led to the development of this model. It had a bad sample, a bad sample frame, and a series of questions exists concerning the body of the surveys, the validating experts, and so on. But it is nevertheless a predominant model in academia. The problem with the model beyond the methodological concerns is that nobody believes in it except HRD academics. Even the primary author, Pat McLagan, has stated publicly that the model is no longer relevant. In fact, she argues that, today, HRD must be the strategic partner with the business in all of the eleven areas of the HR Wheel.

There are other conflicts that emerge with regard to HRD. Career development is well established within the US, and, in addition to HRD programmes, there are also academic programmes in psychology, industrial and organisational psychology, educational psychology, adult education, and counselling. Academics in these fields wonder about the corresponding knowledge in HRD programmes. There are HRD professionals from the OD Network who provide training, with a heavy research focus, for practitioner organisations; these professionals regard OD as a separate discipline and definitely not a part of HRD. And industry says: We are going to get the best people to do the job; we put them in a training programme; if the best of these people are in the personnel department or the HRM department, we are going to let them do the work!

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All of these conflicts suggest that the HRD model itself does not work very well.

There is a debate around what the supporting theories for HRD are and the foundations of HRD. You probably all have heard about the famous three-legged stool. Dick Swanson argues that HRD is supported by three disciplines: systems theory, economics and psychology, all resting on a rug of ethics. I have argued that limiting us to three disciplines is extremely simplistic with the complexity of the work that we are called on to do. The question is, what are the foundation principles? I would suggest that anthropology is absolutely the core of work we do in OD. Ruona has argued for the addition of philosophy. Others have argued for the inclusion of sociology and communications.

Altogether, there is a lot of discomfort with the models that exist in the US. There is a lot of interest in developing the field. What we see happening in the US today is actually a move away from trying to create an overriding model and instead trying to create models that are theoretically based, looking at aspects of HRD. So we see the work that Holton and many others are doing around transfer of training; we see the work that the Ethics Committee of the Academy of HRD and others are doing around ethics; we see the work that is being done by Burke around trying to throw up the actual research model for OD and to recreate a new model that is more inventive, dynamic, and theoretically sound.

So we look forward to new models coming out; we look forward to models that are more focused; but we don't look forward to an overriding model of HRD. I don't think that is going to happen, at least not until we have moved much further forward in the development of our theoretical understanding of what HRD is and the concepts that are foundational to it.

Source Recording of the presentation made at the session 'HRD Practice: A comparison of European and US models' held at the HRD conference in Edinburgh, January 2002 (see [proceedings](#)).
Further reading: [McLean 1998](#), [McLean et al. 2001](#); Record: [Defining HRD in an international context](#).

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European perspective of HRD

Subject

Defining HRD in an international context

Context

Comparative analysis of HRD definitions

Summary

The most common US definitions of HRD have influenced definitions around the world, yet these definitions are also influenced by the context in which they have emerged.

Differences in national culture are reflected in the definitions, including the influence of the economy and of government and legislation, and of professional organisations. Definitions of HRD from the following European countries have been analysed:

- France: the term of 'developpement social' is often used as a synonym of HRD;
- Germany: the field corresponding to HRD is marked by a training industry, consultants and personnel specialists;
- Netherlands: HRD is related to all training and development interventions that are made to create and further develop human expertise within the context of an organisation;
- Russia: HRD is associated with personnel staffing, selection and training, the focus being on managing the employee pool rather than helping individual employees to develop;
- UK: key elements of HRD include activities and processes having an impact on organisational and individual learning.

Furthermore, there appears to be a difference in both the perception and practice of HRD in local companies compared with multinational companies, with the latter being much more likely to be influenced by their home countries.

Key terms

HRD definition; context of national culture; local and multinational companies

Source

McLean et al. 2001

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Subject **Perspectives of HRD in Europe** (Joseph Kessels)

Outline My contribution starts out from an analysis of what could be typical European backgrounds for HRD and HRD practices. The following questions and aspects will be addressed:



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- where do we find HRD practices?
- the European historic background for HRD practices;
- the fragmented cultural map of Europe and its impact on HRD;
- the role of the European Union, of national governments and of universities in the domain of HRD.

This analysis will lead to some general remarks on the European perspectives of HRD.

Where do we find HRD practices?

It makes an enormous difference whether we look at the large multinational companies in Europe or at the great amount of small and medium sized enterprises that have a very strong local basis and are very dependent on education policies in the local regions. Another aspect is that in the domain of HRD we mostly talk about firms, companies or enterprises, but I think an enormous effort is put in HRD practices for instance in schools, in the professional development of teachers and schools leaders. There are HRD activities in the health sectors and hospitals, in local and national government agencies, and of course in the service industry. The characteristics of these work environments definitely have their impact on how HRD practices take place. So, searching for an overriding model or theory is becoming increasingly difficult.

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The European historic background for HRD practices

In many European countries we have a long tradition of apprenticeships based on the guilds. There is a strong history of self-organised education and consultation for institutions in the agricultural sector. For instance in the Netherlands the farmers are very well organised as far as ongoing education and consultation is concerned. We even exported this type of expertise to the developing countries.

Another aspect is that many countries have a strong tradition of vocational education. Here I would like to draw attention to the German example. Vocational education has led to a close collaboration between schools and companies, even to the idea of the 'Lernwerkstatt', the learning company or the learning organisation, which is seen as a prestigious title for a company that offers learning opportunities for young people. This is closely tied to other parts of vocational education, and we also see a merger between vocational education and activities in the domain of HRD in companies. It gives them on the one hand a fuzzy idea, a blurred structure; on the other hand this transition from school to work is an interesting phenomenon. And it doesn't fit in the formal HRD discourse.

Another aspect we find in Europe very strongly is that training has been organised by branches of industry or economic activities. There is a wide range of dedicated training and education offered for instance by the hair dressers, the paper industry, the steel companies, the banking and

insurance companies, and the wine producers. The Netherlands have a long tradition of the company schools run by the larger companies. These schools offer learning opportunities, not specifically job related training, but mostly general education. For large numbers of the population the company schools provided an easy and cheap access to further education and also to further career development. Unfortunately many of these traditional company schools have gone lost.

In some countries we observe a sharp controversy between employers and employees. This very often inhibited the development of joint activities in the domain of HRD. I think a strong example is the UK. In the Netherlands, on the other hand, there is a long history of deliberation and consensus among social partners. This was vital for the development of joint action for training and education. Europe has a tradition of a strongly centralised role of the government, especially in the educational civil service. The best example is perhaps France.

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The fragmented cultural map of Europe and its impact on HRD

Europe shows a fragmented map in terms of cultural differences, economic activities, historic backgrounds, regional differences and, not to forget, language barriers. For communication among international practitioners language plays an important role, not only in sharing ideas, experience and knowledge. Language barriers are also a drawback on the academic development of our profession. There are big differences not only between states but also between various regions in Europe. Examples include the controversies or animosities between the Scottish, the English and the Irish; the differences between Northern Italy, the region around Naples and the area of Sicily; the region around Barcelona and the formal attitudes of the Madrid people.

Interestingly, I became aware of differences in approaches to HRD in Europe by working with international students from Russia and Bulgaria, especially in our joint programmes with the universities of Moscow and Sofia. The students make a lot of records of, for instance, attitudes towards the safety of employees in the production area. One of their comments was: Well, I come from a country where passengers are allowed to travel on the roof of a train; so why do we bother about the safety of the employees? These are examples of culturally determined differences, whether for instance an individual is regarded as an important safety entity. These attitudes have an important impact on our activities for learning and development.

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The role of the European Union, of national governments and of universities in the domain of HRD

The European Union and the national governments promote a strong policy on lifelong learning, on the transition from school to the world of work and on the use of information and communication technologies. Here we see an amazing development especially in countries like Finland, Ireland and Portugal who really benefit from these European and national policies on further development. It is also amazing how fast these changes take place. Finland, Ireland and Portugal were for a long time far away from the centre of development in Europe, and now it looks as if they are important signposts for economic and knowledge development. The role of the European Union together with the national governments create a different impact on the development of HRD than for instance official agencies in other parts of the world .

The universities in Europe again form a very scattered picture, if we take examples from the UK, Denmark and the Netherlands. The University of Warwick is an example of a modern entrepreneurial university; the University of Ålborg has a strong position in the

environment of new industrial activities; and the University of Twente as one of the younger entrepreneurial universities has strong links with industry. All three universities combine close relationships with industry with excellent performance on scientific output, whereas a number of old and traditional European universities try to achieve the same in full isolation.

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Some general remarks on the European perspective of HRD

It is quite tricky to make these general remarks on the European perspective of HRD after portraying this scattered picture.

First of all, my observation is that HRD is not regarded as a well defined, generally accepted, and recognised domain. In many instances Europeans see HRD as an American invention, imported to Europe, which is helpful as an umbrella to bring together many different activities, but I do not see a real search for a single model or field. We seem to enjoy divergence and difference rather than feeling a need for having a unifying definition or theory. Many activities that we in Europe combine under the general umbrella of HRD have to do with learning of adults in the context of a profession, of work, also voluntary work, of political engagement and citizenship. So it's not tightly and exclusively attached to commercial activities or large companies.

When looking at all these differences in HRD practices we could say that there are two dominant paradigms, although many practitioners are probably not aware of these. The first paradigm I would like to describe in the following terms: 'we all need to work to earn a living; it should be organised in an efficient and effective way; it's best done by professional managers, therefore it is the performance that counts; I offer my labour, I am obedient and loyal in exchange for a salary and security'. The work, the enterprise, the board's opinion or strategy are an unquestioned legitimisation of human activity, and therefore also for the supportive performance improvement and the associated learning and development. Therefore, HRD practices are very often seen as strategic activities to support the mission and the company's strategy.

Another paradigm, very often unconsciously induced, is that work or a job is seen as an attractive and meaningful community of practice. It is regarded as an important means of professional development, as a vehicle for the development of personal talents and of self-fulfilment. From a European perspective, especially in the critical philosophy and the politically engaged practices, this last paradigm has always received much attention, particularly among academics, labour unions and students. In this context, network learning theories, the role of power, and actors' perspectives play an important role, as well as concepts like coaching and personal development plans.

Many of these aspects can be found in company practices as well, where they probably have a different background and stem from a different philosophy. In the last thirty years, especially in Europe, we observe an enormous growth of economic wealth. This creates more room for HRD practices in this domain of personal development, as a vehicle for professional development, creative imagination and for gaining autonomy. It is a question whether this position can be maintained in a period of economic decline and depression. We are now approaching an interesting turning point in this field.

When we have to look at perspectives in terms of what we see in the near future for HRD in Europe it is inevitable - due to the developments in economic activity, the emerging movement towards a learning society, an information society or knowledge economy - that the character of work will change dramatically. This change will have an impact on HRD practices. When it becomes important that every individual in a company

should contribute to knowledge development we have to find ways how to promote this. The paradigm of performance improvement is a strong and accepted logic in terms of making a clear description of the aims and a sharp analysis of the existing situation, conducting a gap analysis and implementing well-designed interventions. This will be quite difficult in an environment where we don't know what challenges and problems we will face tomorrow. From this perspective, a paradigm that supports a strong personal development could offer more opportunities than a predominantly managerial oriented approach to training and development. But we don't know, and therefore we are heading for a very interesting period. Perhaps in the coming years there will be some evidence of how HRD, especially in Europe, will develop.

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Source Recording of the presentation made at the session 'HRD Practice: A comparison of European and US models' held at the HRD conference in Edinburgh, January 2002 (see [proceedings](#)).
Further reading: [Kessels 2001](#); [Woodall 2001](#).

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Highlight HRD practice: A comparison of European and US models

Subject An overriding model of HRD?

Context The discussion summarised below is related to the presentations made by Gary McLean on [HRD models in the United States](#) and by Joseph Kessels on [perspectives of HRD in Europe](#).

Discussion Participants: Joseph Kessels (JK), Monica Lee (ML), Graem Martin (GM), Gary McLean (GMc) and others (XX)

[GM:] Both speakers have said that it's really very difficult and actually not desirable to look for a common theory or a common paradigm of HRD. Perhaps the best we could get to is to have multiple paradigms which are more or less useful for what we are trying to do.

[GMc:] I agree. My observation is that there are people in the US who would really like a unified theory. My position is that this is not going to happen, it can't happen, for all of the reasons that have been said. What I see happening is that we are moving towards a better understanding of very near areas, like assessment, training and evaluation.

[JK:] There is still a difference between 'it is not feasible' or whether it would be necessary.

[GMc:] I say it's not needed, but there are certainly colleagues of mine who would disagree with that. I do want to be very clear - I am not speaking for the US or the Academy in the US!

It's very interesting to see what emerges. The Academy of HRD has launched a new journal called HRD Review, with its sole purpose of looking at the development of theory within the area of HRD. I think how these manuscripts emerge will say a great deal about where we are as a field around these very issues.

[JK:] What you do see happening is that people are now starting to move to these new areas. Researchers are developing alternative paradigms in their fields.

[XX:] Gary, you said that academic programmes tend to use this McLagan model. Do you see any movement to abandon it?

[GMc:] No, I don't. I am always hoping for a possibility of change, and I think there is a possibility for it to change.

[GM:] If you have a look at the content of HRM programmes, they haven't changed for 30, 40, 50 years in the US. That's because of the power politics of the universities and other institutions. There is a very strong barrier to movement because there are vested interests in this.

[ML:] It seems to me that the politics, the political systems behind it all have a major effect. It's quite easy for us to forget how hard the political systems are.

[XX:] ... which are also operating within and in favour of the organisations' legal systems.

[XX:] In terms of political processes going on, in HRD and HRM programmes, there is a sense of security as well; people hold on to believes: 'we do have a theory and we can prove it'.

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Subject **Making progress with HRD in an academic environment**

Context The discussion summarised below is related to the presentation made by Joseph Kessels on [perspectives of HRD in Europe](#).

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Discussion Participants: Joseph Kessels (JK) and Gene Roth (GR)

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[GR:] Joseph, you are working in this nebulous area of HRD at your own institution. What are the frameworks you are trying to set when you try to make your claims for space and elbow your way in the institution?

[JK:] I think the only way to make progress is to find out what you really would like to do, what you do find interesting, because it is the only way to be excellent; and then find out who are your companions with whom you share common ideas; because you need a number of colleagues who really enjoy working together. Then new things can happen, especially in an academic environment. A similar model you see emerge in knowledge intensive work: 'we are not any more bound by the strategy of the company; we will say you have a great idea, we enjoy doing it, and maybe you can earn money with it, because it is new, it is diverse, it is not focusing on standardisation, on rules and procedures, but it is focusing on how we can be different. What is my special sound: can I be recognised?'. These will be some of the features of this information society or knowledge economy, realising how different we are and how our values fit under the same umbrella. When we talk in this conference about communities, the attractiveness of working together, emotions and involvement are important: what makes you motivated, what leads to self-fulfilment. This does not only apply to our objects of research, but also applies to ourselves, specifically in the knowledge oriented environment of the university.

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Subject **Conclusion (Jim Stewart)**

Outline Can I close by thanking again our speakers for stimulating such a lively discussion. Thank you too to all of those who contributed with comments, arguments and questions. I certainly enjoyed the session and my impression is that all of you did too.

It is an impossible job to summarise or to draw any clear conclusions from our discussion. It seems apparent that many people share the views of our speakers that single models do not exist in either Europe or the USA. I was also struck though by some of the references to postmodernism in the debate. If I am allowed to express a personal view; and since I am the Chair of the session I grant myself permission!; I do think we can reach a post-modern like conclusion by asserting three things to be true. First, there is no such thing as an American model of HRD. Second, there is no such thing as a European model of HRD. And third, they are very different! Thank you all again.

Source Transcript of the author; recording of the session 'HRD Practice: A comparison of European and US models' held at the HRD conference in Edinburgh, January 2002 (see [proceedings](#)).

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Subject **Comparing national systems of HRD (Peter Kuchinke)**

Context System differences in the preparation of HRD professionals in the US and the UK

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Summary

This research is part of a larger agenda, that is to describe what I call national systems of HRD, with the assumption that nations differ in those system areas in which HRD is conducted. Structural differences in the countries would be worth while investigating as we are building what we call international or perhaps comparative HRD research.

I spent a few days in Germany. One of the lead articles in the national newspapers talked about the lack of innovativeness and creativity in Germany. The statement was made that German workers are among the best skilled and most highly motivated in the world, and yet the structural barriers are preventing innovation. This is to show that the institutional factors do matter. My assessment is that in the literature we have not taken account of these institutional forces to the degree we should have as a profession.

The purpose of the HRD master's level or postgraduate programmes comes from the realisation that universities are an important part of subsistence of HRD. It's there that practitioners get their training and future leaders are being trained. The following points are raised in the system comparison of postgraduate degree programmes in the UK and US:

- Looking at the economic history it seems that the two streams of development of the two countries are characterised by movements between nationalisation and privatisation of major industries, regulation and deregulation, and the impact of competition in technology. The US certainly has been much more decentralised and deregulated and laissez-fair than what appears to be the UK context.
- HRD begins to appear in the US scene as a major public policy debate, with a massive level of criticism of the public school sector saying that the public schools are poor in preparing young children for a productive and competitive economic life in the workforce. The US does not have a system of educational qualifications to the degree that is present in the UK.
- A key difference between the two countries is the role and extent to which the accreditation is concerned. The impact the CAT is to have in the UK, both on academic programmes and on professionals, is far greater than what exists in the US.
- Another fundamental difference is the role and function of professional associations. The Academy of HRD has a personal-level membership, while the University Forum of HRD has an institutional membership. This plays a great role in the impact that each organisation is to have. Where we have a personal-level membership there is no coordination at least at institutional level, there is no mechanism in place to compare curricula and areas of research to a degree that we have with institutional membership.
- If we look at how the field is defined, in prominent literature and textbooks, the emphasis of HRD definition in the UK tends to be more strategic, long-term organic and focused on change, than in

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the US.

- Courses in the UK are primarily about HRM, with a minority having HRD in the title; the programmes are provided almost without exception in schools of business. In the US HRD programmes are defined in terms of education; more is happening in schools of education.
- Looking at the curriculum there are interesting findings. The most critically taught subject areas in the US HRD programmes are structure and design, programme development and delivery, programme evaluation, adult learning theories, needs and policy analysis, history and philosophy of HRD. So there is a focus on education, training and development among US programmes. In the UK virtually all programmes are for subject matter in HRM, in particular courses on organisational behaviour, strategic HRD, organisational development and change, international and comparative HRM. The absence in both countries are post-modern courses in HRD, critical approaches, critical theories of HRD, at least from a view of titles and course curricula. Also absent is a focus on population, corporate stake holders, disadvantaged population, union-based organisations.

Where does this lead us? Two countries with a similar economic tradition and comparable system have very different types of academic preparation of HRD practitioners. These differences matter if we begin to describe international differences in HRD. Similar research needs to happen at practitioner level, about the scope, the role and the impact of HRD in different countries – not so much to find out one best way, but to describe and circumscribe the range of variation towards a better understanding of the choices we can make.

Key terms	HRD professionals; postgraduate degree programmes in the UK and US; professional associations; HRM and HRD;
Source	Recording of the presentation by Peter Kuchinke on 'Comparing national systems of human resource development: Content and structure of postgraduate HRD courses of study in the UK and US' at the HRD Conference in Edinburgh, 2002 (conference details see >Info desk >Events). Further reading: Kuchinke 2000 ; Kuchinke 2001 .

Descriptors D-HRD EP00 R05

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Record European perspective of HRD

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Subject **HRD in Europe at the crossroads** (Barry Nyhan)

Context Referring to 'humanistic-developmental' versus 'instrumental-utilitarian' approaches to HRD

 **HRD practice**

Summary This paper examines the concept and practice of HRD from a European perspective. It locates HRD, which is seen to refer specifically to learning, training and development activities in companies, within the context of underlying 'people-management' theories (HRM) or what can be termed 'industrial or working-life cultures'. This paper contrasts two theories of HRD derived from two different ways of conceiving HRM. The first of these, which is seen to have much in common with classical European industrial and working life values, is the 'humanistic-developmental' tradition. The competing model, which it is argued is growing in prominence in Europe, is characterised by an 'instrumental-utilitarian' way of looking at human resources. The paper concludes that at the present time HRD policy makers in Europe are caught up in a debate about these two approaches. In fact, Europe can be seen to be at the crossroads searching for a signpost leading to human resource management and development policies that promote lifelong learning for everybody at work with the view to building a strong and sustainable economy.

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Debate Participants: Barry Nyhan (BNy), Tarja Tikkanen (TT), John Walton (JW) and a colleague from Texas (XX)

[JW:] The question you presented is the dichotomy between the functional and the humanistic. It seems to me this is a conditional paradigm which has got two choices. The concept of having two choices conveys the idea of a lack of values. Taking the utilitarian concept for example – The trains in Northern England were on strike, basically because they sacked train drivers when they didn't need them; now the need them they can't get them. This is a major problem all round the country because we don't have national organisations which train them any longer. this is just a personal feeling, an experience from yesterday which colours my judgement of this dichotomy you are presenting. I think it's a very simplistic one if one is presenting just polarised approaches. Society is pluralistic, is dynamic.

[BNy:] I accept your point about polarising the different values, but I think there is a sort of movement within HRD in the way it functions. I mentioned choice, but I also mentioned the mediating role: how does one mediate between very different approaches; how does one argue these things, ow does one negotiate in a European context.

[XX:] I am curious as well about the dichotomist aspects of your paper. My research focuses on Central and Eastern Europe and government action related to HRD. I see the mediating role in that context to be closely related to social policy, to democratisation. I am wondering if your study went into the regional differences between Northern-Southern and Western-Eastern-Central Europe, whether there is any evidence with regard to the mediating aspect at a social policy level.

[BNy:] What I don't do is to study or analyse the traditions. I see the situation the countries in Central and Eastern Europe are in a very chaotic state, in a transitional state; they are moving very much towards the liberal way of running their countries; there is an enormous amount of learning with regard to their communist dominated past. There are very distinctive features the UK has got. There is the continental tradition with

Germany and also the Netherlands and Denmark, based on apprenticeship systems, small companies, and links to the social systems. The Nordic tradition, such as the Swedish model, is based on societal values, on egalitarianism. In France, Spain and Portugal there is a more bureaucratic tradition, with a sort of top-down legislation for trade unions, and a rigid structure of society and of membership. So there are great differences within Europe.

[TT:] It's going tricky for HRD because it seems that, as Barry Nyhan is suggesting, lifelong learning is becoming so powerful. So what HRD was doing in companies earlier might now merge under a still broader approach to learning. This broader approach is lifelong learning; the challenge is really on another level now. In those companies that we investigated the employees seemed to be willing to do their work with continuous learning. A central issue in this was management: how managers cope with the challenge of learning.

Key terms	Learning economy, lifelong learning, learning in interaction between company and environment
Source	Nyhan, Barry. HRD in Europe – At the crossroads. Abstract. Conference Programme of the HRD conference at Edinburgh 2002, p. 4 (conference details see >Info desk >Events). See also Nyhan 2001 (Vol. II, pp. 233-248). Recording of the discussion related to the presentation by Barry Nyhan at the HRD Conference in Edinburgh 2002 (see proceedings).
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Subject **HRD agenda in Europe**

Context Analysis of the European agenda of HRD, based on the evaluation of papers presented at the conference on HRD research and practice across Europe, Kingston Business School, London, 15 January 2000

Summary The diverse range of contributions to the conference on HRD research and practice across Europe, held at Kingston Business School in 2000 (Conference 2000), indicate the breadth of the HRD agenda in Europe. The following common themes may be identified:

- "HRD in Europe is a much more 'fuzzy' concept than is understood within the USA. There are no recognisable boundaries, and the disciplinary base is not confined to areas such as systems theory, labour economics, organisation development, adult education, etc.
- HRD research in Europe welcomes a wide range of research designs and methodologies.
- The European tradition of critically reflective discourse that seeks to explore and challenge concepts and frameworks is also present in European HRD research.
- There is an acute awareness that many of the established prescriptions of professional practice (e.g. competencies, mentoring, strategic integration of HRD, HRD practitioner skills and roles) are not wholly adequate and require adaptation to cultural circumstances.
- 'Managing' learning in organisations is less about adhering to formal procedures for design, delivery, etc. of instruction, and increasingly about creating the environmental conditions (including building trust, fostering networks, and working with a range of stakeholders) within which learning can take place."

Key terms HRD agenda; concept of HRD; critically reflective discourse; professional practice; environmental conditions for learning

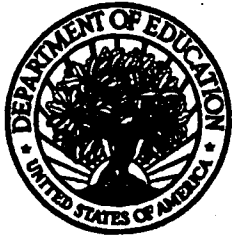
Source [Woodall et al. 2001a](#), pp. 350f.

Descriptors D-HRD EP00 R06

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