

**BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN LEARNING FOR MID-
CAREER MANAGERS IN THE SCOTTISH LIFE ASSURANCE
INDUSTRY**

VOLUME II

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**A thesis submitted by Martin G. McCracken for the degree of Doctor
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VOLUME II

APPENDICES

LIST OF TABLES

Table A1.1	Sampling Frame for Lothian Life
Table A2.1	Intrinsic Factors and Learning for Managers in Central Life
Table A2.2	Extrinsic Factors and Learning for Managers in Central Life
Table A2.3	Central Life Manager Profiles
Table A2.4	Perceptual issues and Prospects for Participation in Learning amongst CL Informants
Table A2.5	Emotional factors and prospects for participation in learning amongst CL Informants
Table A2.6	Motivational factors and prospects for participation in learning amongst CL Informants
Table A2.7	Cognitive issues and prospects for participation in learning amongst CL Informants (General)
Table A2.8	Cognitive issues and prospects for participation in learning amongst CL Informants (Vocational Activities)
Table A2.9	Organisational cultural issues (Culture of organisation and industry): Impact on learning in CL
Table A2.10	MD Culture issues (Opportunities learning climate in organisation): Impact on learning in CL
Table A2.11	Physical Resource Issues (Time, place, costs): Impact on learning in CL
Table A3.1	Intrinsic Factors and Learning for Managers in Lothian Life
Table A3.2	Extrinsic Factors and Learning for Managers in Lothian Life
Table A3.3	Lothian Life Manager Profiles
Table A3.4	Perceptual issues and Prospects for Participation in Learning amongst LL Informants
Table A3.5	Emotional factors and prospects for participation in learning amongst LL Informants
Table A3.6	Motivational factors and prospects for participation in learning amongst LL Informants
Table A3.7	Cognitive issues and prospects for participation in learning amongst LL Informants (General)
Table A3.8	Cognitive issues and prospects for participation in learning amongst LL Informants (Vocational Activities)
Table A3.9	Organisational cultural issues (Culture of organisation and industry): Impact on learning in LL
Table A3.10	MD Culture issues (Opportunities learning climate in organisation): Impact on learning in LL
Table A3.11	Physical Resource Issues (Time, place, costs): Impact on learning in LL
Table A4.1	Intrinsic Factors and Learning for Managers in Grampian Life
Table A4.2	Extrinsic Factors and Learning for Managers in Grampian Life
Table A4.3	Grampian Life Manager Profiles
Table A4.4	Perceptual issues and Prospects for Participation in Learning amongst GL Informants
Table A4.5	Emotional factors and prospects for participation in learning amongst GL Informants
Table A4.7	Cognitive issues and prospects for participation in learning amongst GL Informants (General)
Table A4.8	Cognitive issues and prospects for participation in learning amongst GL Informants (Vocational Activities)

Table A4.9	Organisational cultural issues (Culture of organisation and industry): Impact on learning in GL
Table A4.10	MD Culture issues (Opportunities learning climate in organisation): Impact on learning in GL
Table A4.11	Physical Resource Issues (Time, place, costs): Impact on learning in GL
Table A5.1	Intrinsic Factors and Learning for Managers in Borders Life
Table A5.2	Extrinsic Factors and Learning for Managers in Borders Life
Table A5.3	Borders Life Manager Profiles
Table A5.4	Perceptual issues and Prospects for Participation in Learning amongst BL Informants
Table A5.5	Emotional factors and prospects for participation in learning amongst BL Informants
Table A5.6	Motivational factors and prospects for participation in learning amongst BL Informants
Table A5.7	Cognitive issues and prospects for participation in learning amongst BL Informants (General)
Table A5.8	Cognitive issues and prospects for participation in learning amongst BL Informants (Vocational Activities)
Table A5.9	Organisational cultural issues (Culture of organisation and industry): Impact on learning in BL
Table A5.10	MD Culture issues (Opportunities learning climate in organisation): Impact on learning in BL
Table A5.11	Physical Resource Issues (Time, place, costs): Impact on learning in BL
Table A6.1	Intrinsic Factors and Learning for Managers in Highland Life
Table A6.2	Extrinsic Factors and Learning for Managers in Highland Life
Table A6.3	Central Life Manager Profiles
Table A6.4	Perceptual issues and Prospects for Participation in Learning amongst HL Informants
Table A6.5	Emotional factors and prospects for participation in learning amongst HL Informants
Table A6.6	Motivational factors and prospects for participation in learning amongst HL Informants
Table A6.7	Cognitive issues and prospects for participation in learning amongst HL Informants (General)
Table A6.8	Cognitive issues and prospects for participation in learning amongst HL Informants (Vocational Activities)
Table A6.9	Organisational cultural issues (Culture of organisation and industry): Impact on learning in HL
Table A6.10	MD Culture issues (Opportunities learning climate in organisation). Impact on learning in HL
Table A6.11	Physical Resource Issues (Time, place, costs): Impact on learning in HL

TABLE OF CONTENTS - VOLUME TWO

LIST OF TABLES

APPENDIX ONE:

Methodology Issues

A1.1 Specimen access letter to life assurance HR managers	1
A1.2 Sampling Frame for Lothian Life	2
A1.3 Questions and Checklist for Mid-Career Managers	3
A1.4 Interview schedule for Training and Development Manager	8
A1.5 Coding Scheme	12
A1.6 Segment from Coded Fieldwork Interview	15
A1.7 Thematic Conceptual Matrix for MOT-BARS (Motivational Barriers to Learning in Central Life)	18

APPENDIX TWO:

Central Life Assurance Company

A2.1 Organisation Context	24
A2.2 Intrinsic Issues and Learning	25
A2.2.1 Perceived need for participation – Perceptual	25
A2.2.2 Emotional Factors and Learning	29
A2.2.3 Motivational Issues and Learning	31
A2.2.4 Previous Learning Experiences– Cognitive (General)	33
A2.2.5 Previous Learning Experiences– Cognitive (Vocational)	35
A2.3 Extrinsic Issues and Learning	37
A2.3.1 Organisational culture	37
A2.3.2 MD culture	41
A2.3.3 Physical Resource issues	44
A2.4 Summary and Conclusions	47
A2.4.1 Intrinsic Factors: General Conclusions	47
A2.4.2 Extrinsic Factors: General Themes and Conclusions	49
A2.4.3 Final Remarks	50
Tables A2.3-A2.11	53-65

APPENDIX THREE:

Lothian Life Assurance Company

A3.1 Organisation Context	66
A3.2 Intrinsic Issues and Learning	67
A3.2.1 Perceived need for participation – Perceptual	67
A3.2.2 Emotional Factors and Learning	69
A3.2.3 Motivational Issues and Learning	73
A3.2.4 Previous Learning Experiences– Cognitive (General)	75
A3.2.5 Previous Learning Experiences– Cognitive (Vocational)	78
A3.3 Extrinsic Issues and Learning	81
A3.3.1 Organisational culture	81
A3.3.2 MD culture	84
A3.3.3 Physical Resource issues	86
A3.4 Summary and Conclusions	89
A3.4.1 Intrinsic Factors: General Conclusions	89
A3.4.2 Extrinsic Factors: General Themes and Conclusions	92
A3.4.3 Final Remarks	93
Tables A3.3-A3.11	95-104

APPENDIX FOUR:

Grampian Life Assurance Company

A4.1 Organisation Context	105
A4.2 Intrinsic Issues and Learning	106
A4.2.1 Perceived need for participation – Perceptual	106
A4.2.2 Emotional Factors and Learning	109
A4.2.3 Motivational Issues and Learning	112
A4.2.4 Previous Learning Experiences– Cognitive (General)	114
A4.2.5 Previous Learning Experiences– Cognitive (Vocational)	117
A4.3 Extrinsic Issues and Learning	119
A4.3.1 Organisational culture	119
A4.3.2 MD culture	123
A4.3.3 Physical Resource issues	126
A4.4 Summary and Conclusions	128
A4.4.1 Intrinsic Factors: General Conclusions	128
A4.4.2 Extrinsic Factors: General Themes and Conclusions	131
A4.4.3 Final Remarks	132
Tables A4.3-A4.11	134-147

APPENDIX FIVE:

Borders Life Assurance Company

A5.1 Organisation Context	148
A5.2 Intrinsic Issues and Learning	149
A5.2.1 Perceived need for participation – Perceptual	149
A5.2.2 Emotional Factors and Learning	152
A5.2.3 Motivational Issues and Learning	155
A5.2.4 Previous Learning Experiences– Cognitive (General)	157
A5.2.5 Previous Learning Experiences– Cognitive (Vocational)	160
A5.3 Extrinsic Issues and Learning	163
A5.3.1 Organisational culture	163
A5.3.2 MD culture	167
A5.3.3 Physical Resource issues	170
A5.4 Summary and Conclusions	174
A5.4.1 Intrinsic Factors: General Conclusions	174
A5.4.2 Extrinsic Factors: General Themes and Conclusions	176
A5.4.3 Final Remarks	178
Tables A5.3 A5.11	179-190

APPENDIX SIX:

Highland Life Assurance Company

A6.1 Organisation Context	191
A6.2 Intrinsic Issues and Learning	192
A6.2.1 Perceived need for participation – Perceptual	193
A6.2.2 Emotional Factors and Learning	196
A6.2.3 Motivational Issues and Learning	199
A6.2.4 Previous Learning Experiences– Cognitive (General)	201
A6.2.5 Previous Learning Experiences– Cognitive (Vocational)	203
A6.3 Extrinsic Issues and Learning	206
A6.3.1 Organisational culture	206
A6.3.2 MD culture	209
A6.3.3 Physical Resource issues	212
A6.4 Summary and Conclusions	216
A6.4.1 Intrinsic Factors: General Conclusions	216
A6.4.2 Extrinsic Factors: General Themes and Conclusions	218
A6.4.3 Final Remarks	221
Tables A6.3-A6.11	223-236

APPENDIX SEVEN

Background Information relating to the Five Case Organisations

A7.1 Introduction	237
A7.2 Central Life Assurance Company	237
A7.2.1 Management Structure and Communication Process	237
A7.2.2 Organisational Culture	239
A7.2.3 Organisational Strategy and Management Development	239
A7.2.4 Human Resource Development Processes	240
A7.2.5 Measuring Performance Outcomes	242
A7.3 Lothian Life Assurance Company	242
A7.3.1 Management Structure and Communication Process	242
A7.3.2 Organisational Culture	244
A7.3.3 Organisational Strategy and Management Development	245
A7.3.4 Human Resource Development Processes	246
A7.3.5 Measuring Performance Outcomes	248
A7.4 Grampian Life Assurance Company	249
A7.4.1 Management Structure and Communication Process	249
A7.4.2 Organisational Culture	250
A7.4.3 Organisational Strategy and Management Development	251
A7.4.4 Human Resource Development Processes	253
A7.4.5 Measuring Performance Outcomes	255
A7.5 Borders Life Assurance Company	256
A7.5.1 Management Structure and Communication Process	256
A7.5.2 Organisational Culture	257
A7.5.3 Organisational Strategy and Management Development	258
A7.5.4 Human Resource Development Processes	258
A7.5.5 Measuring Performance Outcomes	259
A7.6 Highland Life Assurance Company	261
A7.6.1 Management Structure and Communication Process	261
A7.6.2 Organisational Culture	262
A7.6.3 Organisational Strategy and Management Development	264
A7.6.4 Human Resource Development Processes	265
A7.6.5 Measuring Performance Outcomes	266

APPENDIX ONE

Methodology Issues

A1.1 – Specimen access letter to life assurance HR managers

Mr XXXXX XXXXX
Personnel Manager
Highland Life Assurance Co
XXXXXXX
XXXXXXX
XXXX XXXX

NAPIER UNIVERSITY RESEARCH PROJECT ON BARRIERS TO LEARNING FOR MID CAREER MANAGERS

Dear Mr XXXXX

21 February 1997

We are writing to you to invite members of your organisation to take part in a research project we are conducting into barriers to learning for mid career managers. After an initial meeting with the Personnel Manager of Borders Life, he indicated that he will lend his support to the study and also suggested that we contact yourself with regard to conducting research at Highland Life.

The research project will cover all the major Scottish based Life Assurance offices in Scotland and the opinions and comments of mid career managers in your organisation will contribute invaluablely towards the development of a current picture of management learning and development in this sector in Scotland. The information you provide will also influence future teaching on Institute of Personnel Development (IPD) courses at Napier University and therefore benefit many people in your profession.

The enclosed Research Brief summarises the aim and importance of research into the learning of mid career managers and also indicates how the research is to be conducted, i.e. semi structured interviews with around five to ten mid-career managers in each of the Life Assurance Institutions.

We would like to stress at this point that this is a non-commercial research project and the findings will not be open to the public. All data and the identity of individuals concerned will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Whilst we appreciate the demands on your time, we would be extremely grateful if we could meet with you to discuss carrying out research at Highland Life and the practicalities that it may involve.

We shall contact you in the coming week to gauge your initial thoughts on these matters and look forward to speaking with you then.

Yours sincerely

Martin McCracken MA
Research Assistant in Management Studies

Mary Wallace BA MIPD
Senior Lecturer in Management Studies

A1.2 Sampling Frame for Lothian Life

The Personnel Department at Lothian Life supplied a list of 48 managers' aged between 35 50 years. From this list 20 managers were randomly chosen to participate in the research. Table A1.1 below illustrates the departments to which these managers were attached and also their gender. The Lothian Life Personnel Department did not disclose the managers' ages and therefore this factor could not be used in selecting the sample.

Table A1.1 Sampling Frame for Lothian Life

Department	No. of MCMs	% of Total	No. Male	No. Female	No. to be selected	No. contacted (Random selection)	No. agreeing to interview
Administration	6	12.5	4	2	2.5	3	1
Investment	5	10.4	5	0	2.08	2	1
Accountancy	5	10.4	2	3	2.08	2	1
Information Systems	9	18.75	7	2	3.75	3	3
Marketing	7	14.60	6	1	2.92	3	2
Actuarial	3	6.25	2	1	1.25	1	1
Sales*	3	6.25	3	0	1.25	0	0
Compliance	1	2.10	1	0	0.42	1	1
Personnel	1	2.10	1	0	0.42	1	1
Pensions	8	16.7	6	2	3.34	4	2
Total	48	100	37	11	20	20	13

Although attempts were made to make the sample representative on the basis of gender and department, from the twenty managers contacted, only thirteen indicated their willingness to participate on the research. Unfortunately only one female was included in this group.

* It was indicated by the Training and Development Manager that it would be very difficult for anyone in the Sales department to participate due to their work commitments.

A1.3 Questions and Checklist for Mid-Career Managers

(I would like to stress the confidentiality of this meeting and assure you that no one else apart from myself will have access to this cassette. The purpose of taping this meeting is in the first instance to allow it to flow and secondly it helps to prevent me from quoting you incorrectly.)

Introduction

Brief explanation of <i>what exactly I am doing</i> , and the <i>purpose</i> and <i>structure</i> .

- In general a study into *Management training and development as part of the requirements of a PhD thesis*.
- Particular *focus on barriers or obstacles in taking up learning opportunities*'
- *This meeting* should take no longer than 1 hour, however at this point I would like to invite you to take part in *further discussions at a later date* which perhaps may be used to talk about some of the more salient issues raised here

The broad *structure of the interview* will be as follows:

- I. *Firstly*, I would like to discuss some issues relating to your own *experiences and perceptions of learning*.
- II. *Secondly*, consideration of some specific *organisational* issues.
- III. *Lastly*, I would like to clarify some *Personal Details* with you.

Interview Checklist

I. Personal Experiences and Perceptions of Learning

Give details of your previous experiences of formal education, and also other learning activities.

Clarify as all experiences i.e. (Primary, Secondary, Further and Higher and also work related.)

Follow ups: Any event or aspect which stands out?
Had an affect on decisions regarding further study?
Anything else, e.g. involved in any, Projects, Outward Bounds, School Board of Governors, Leisure Activities...
How are you finding it - enjoyable, a bind (something to be put up with), valuable, difficult, easy....

Why did you undertake this activity?

Follow ups: Was it self initiated, by Line Manager, Department, Company?
Funding of it?
Is doing it expected of you? - Why?
Have you seen any implications for your career aspirations as a result of (not) undertaking such an activity?

What learning styles have you experienced?

Would you say you had a preferred personal method or style of learning.

Follow ups: Which formal approaches do you find effective? (E.g. Lecture based, group discussion, informality, team-based)

Were there any factors which inhibited your participation in any learning activity?

Follow ups: Which do you think are the hardest to overcome? Why?
Elaborate with examples?

How important is learning and development to you?

Follow ups: Are there any major factors or events which have influenced this?
Origins of such perception towards education and training?
Would you regard yourself as a risk-taker and self-starter?
Have you heard of the term of Lifelong Learning - what would you say this meant to you?

Were you aware of other relevant learning opportunities (specify) - Did you consider any alternatives?

Follow ups: Would you know where to look for opportunities that may be relevant to you?

How do you see your career developing in 2, 5 and 10 years time?

Follow ups: Is it formalised
Does the organisation have a clear career and succession policy for management?
Where do you fit into that?

II. Organisational and Environmental Issues

What in your opinion are the most important external pressures on this industry at present.

Follow ups: Any affect on your perception on learning and development?
What effect do you think this has on the training and development of your colleagues?

How do you perceive these external changes to have impacted on employment practices in this company?

Follow ups: Emergence of a 'New Deal'
Shift in Psychological Contract
More pressure on managers - increased working hours
Not taking as much leave, need to be present more?

How would you describe the Organisation Culture.

Clarify (Basically talking about the way things are done around here, the best way to think about it would be to consider another organisation that you have worked with in terms of general atmosphere of superiors, subordinates....)

Follow ups: Could you give examples of this in everyday terms?
Do you feel there has been any changing in culture?
Is there Trade Union representation here?

More specifically could you describe your perception of the culture in relation to management training and development?

Follow ups: How is learning and development viewed by the organisation?
Are you aware of a company strategy on training and development -
Does it exist in writing and could you obtain a copy if you wanted one?
Is Mgt. Development actively promoted and supported here?
What resources are made available to support development activity?
Is there a specific person who can be approached on development issues? e.g. Your immediate boss (typical of most?), training liaison?
How are these people viewed by you - by others?

What constraints do you feel are present in the organisation in relation to management development?

Follow ups: In your own personal experience? - Can you elaborate on these?
If you wanted to go on a course within the company is there a difficult process to justify it?
Have others ever communicated any other courses to you that you may not have experienced?
Would most managers in your situation have similar experiences?

Are others in a similar position to yourself embarking on management development and training opportunities?

Clarify: (Also talking about things like secondments, attending conferences, time in another department, divisional...)

Follow ups: What kind? Are there others which could be described as something else? (other than MD)
Does this influence you in any way? Is it expected of them?

III. Personal Factual Details

Clarify: (At this point I would like to just finish off this meeting by confirming some personal factual details with you, however if you feel that some are too intrusive then I'll understand if you decline to answer them)

Age

Marital Status

Spouse's Occupation

Qualifications held, e.g., A Levels, HND, Degree, Professional

Children

Ages / Stage in Education

Parents Occupations / Education

Official Organisational Title / Role

Previous Employment

Distance (Length of time) / Method of Travel to Work

Principal Leisure Activities (Related Achievements - Who do you participate with?)

IV. Conclusion

At this point I would like to thank you for taking part in this stage of the research and your valuable comments in this discussion. In the immediate future I can provide you with a transcript of this meeting, and I should also like to in the future perhaps come and visit you again with a view to clarifying some of the issues that were covered here.

Thank-you again for your interest and co-operation in this study.

A1.4 Interview schedule for Training and Development Manager

(This meeting is confidential, no one else apart from myself will have access to this cassette. The purpose of taping this meeting is in the first instance to allow it to flow and to make sure I do not interpret your answers incorrectly.)

Introduction

- In general a study into *Management training and development as part of the requirements of a PhD thesis*.
- Particular *focus on barriers or obstacles in taking up learning opportunities*'
- *This meeting* should take no longer than 1 hour, and is designed to allow me to ask about the *Training and development strategies for managers in Central Life*.

The broad structure of the interview will be as follows:

- I. *Firstly*, I would like ask about the *company structure, culture and the hierarchy* which exist in the company.
- II. *Secondly*, I would like to discuss some issues relating to *organisational strategy and management development*.
- III. *Thirdly*, consideration of some specific issues in relation to the *HRD processes*.
- IV. *Lastly*, I would like to about *management development and performance*.

1. Company Structure, Culture and Hierarchy

Could you briefly outline the structure and hierarchy of the company?

Follow up: Decision making processes
Communication processes

Could you describe the corporate culture here?

Follow up: If change apparent who have been the major drivers of it?
Would you say there was a culture of learning present in this organisation?
Empowerment and experimentation a feature of this culture?

2. Organisational strategy

Does organisational strategy influence your MD?

Follow up: What determines your strategy for MD?
Can you give me some concrete examples of how MD links with organisational strategy?
Do departmental strategies also influence MD? (Examples)
Could MD be linked more closely with organisational strategy? How might this be done?

Who has some responsibility for MD?

- Individuals?
- Personnel/human resources
- Line managers?
- Others?

What is the responsibility of each?

3. HRD Processes

Has the organisation's MD, or broader training and development strategy, been recognised in any of the following ways:

Yes/No

- Investors in People status
- National Training Award
- Quality Awards (e.g. BS 5750, ISO 9000)

Is any such application in progress or does the organization intend to apply for recognition in the near future?

To what extent is MD competence based?

Are some, or all, HRD systems and processes based on national occupational standards (i.e. the Management Standards developed by MCI)?

When did you begin to adopt the Standards?

Briefly:

- Are the Standards used in recruitment and selection?
- Are appraisal systems designed to support achievement of the standards?
- Are reward systems related to achievement of the standards (or on individuals achieving other qualification (MBA)?
- Are the Standards used in management training?
- Are personal development objectives defined in terms of the Standards?

If no (to any) what is used instead of the Standards in each area?

Are all managers expected to participate in their own MD?

Are all managers expected to contribute to the MD of their staff?

Who decides what MD is appropriate for an individual?

How are goals of MD for individuals established?

4. Performance outcomes of competence-based management development

What aspects of individual performance do you measure?

- Achievement of individual targets
- Individual managers' portfolios of evidence
- Appraisal reports

By what means are these monitored?

What aspects of team or departmental performance do you measure?

- Achievement of departmental and team targets
- Departmental productivity/effectiveness
- Reductions in waste, returns, complaints etc

Appendix One

By what means are these monitored?

What contribution do you believe MD has made towards improvements in performance under the following headings?

- Individual performance
- Team or organisational performance

How can the benefits of MD be identified in these areas, and on what basis can improvements be attributed to MD as opposed other factors?

A1 5 - Coding Scheme

	<u>PERSONAL</u>	<u>BARRIERS</u>	+ative / - ative effects
<i>TYPE</i>	<i>CODES</i>	<i>DESCRIPTION</i>	- +
PERCEPTUAL	PERTL-BARS	Perceptual barriers to learning	
	PERTL-PROB	No problems at moment so not going to do further development	
	PERTL-NEG	Negative view of learning and development	-
	PERTL-THOUGHT	Never thought of doing such development	
CULTURAL	CULT-BARS	Cultural barriers to learning	
	CULT-HOME	Home life cultural - family (parents)	- / +
	CULT-ORG	How organisation impacts on life	- / +
	CULT-INDY	How industry impacts on life > induce barriers	- / +
EMOTIONAL	EMOT-BARS	Emotional barriers to learning	
	EMOT-FUTURE	Fear for ones security in the future	- / +
	EMOT-FEAR	Fear or embarrassment > inhibits participation in learning	-
	EMOT-TRAITS	Emotional personal traits which may affect participation e.g. shyness	- / +
	EMOT-REGRET	Regrets about the direction of ones career	
	EMOT-EVENT	Emotional event which may have caused a realignment in perception of needs	- / +
MOTIVATION AL	MOT-BARS	Motivational barriers to learning	
	MOT-SELF	Motivating yourself to participate or get most from the learning	
	MOT-WANT	Simply don't want to carry on with more learning - formal or informal	
	MOT-REWARDS	Rewards (not) worth risk of taking up learning experience	- / +
	MOT-WRONG	(Not) worth risk of being proved wrong in learning experience	- / +
COGNITIVE	COG BARS	Cognitive barriers to learning	
	COG-EXPER	Last learning experience affects decision whether or not to participate again	- / +
	COG-FINISH	Last learning experience - glad to finish it, for any reason	-
	COG-EXPECT	Don't think could find anything again to meet expectations after last learning experience	-

Appendix One

INTELLECT- UAL	INTEL- BARS	Intellectual barriers to learning	
	INTEL- STYLE	(Un)limited in learning styles, eg correspondence	- / +
	INTEL- SKILLS	Level of learning skills, eg crammer/well organised	- / +
EXPRESSIVE	EXPR-BARS	Expressive barriers to learning	
	EXPR-COM	Ability to communicate need	- / +
	EXPR- COMSKILLS	Past experience in communication skills	- / +

EXTERNAL	ORGANISATIONAL	BARRIERS	
<i>TYPE</i>	<i>CODES</i>	<i>DESCRIPTION</i>	- +
SITUATIONAL	SITU BARS	Situational barriers to learning	
	SITU-ORG	Availability of relevant opportunities in the organisation	- / +
	SITU-EXT	Availability of relevant opportunities in the external environment	- / +
	SITU-CAR/ORG	Availability of opportunities in present career in organisation	- / +
	SITU-AWARE	Awareness of relevant opportunities	- / +
	SITU-COST	Cost of opportunities to organisation	- / +
PHYSICAL	PHYS-BARS	Physical barriers to learning	
	PHYS-PRESSURE	Pressure to achieve objectives	- / +
	PHYS-TIME/ORG	Availability of time - driven by organisational demands	- / +
	PHYS-TIME/EXT	Availability of time - driven by industry at present	- / +
	PHYS-TIME/HOME	Availability of time - driven by family demands	- / +
	PHYS-LOCATE	Perception of availability of development opportunities in vicinity	- / +
	PHYS-COST	Cost of travel/accommodation	- / +
SPECIFIC (CULTURAL)	SPECIF/ENV BARS	Specific environmental barriers to learning	
	SPECIF-BOSS	Level of support from boss for further development	- / +
	SPECIF-COLS	Level of support from colleagues for further development	- / +

A1.6 Segment from Coded Fieldwork Interview

	<p><u>Interview with GL 2</u></p> <p>1. Personal Experiences and Perceptions of Learning</p> <p><i>MM: Could you give me some details of your previous experiences of formal education and also other learning activities - really since you have joined Scotti h Widows?</i></p> <p>[1] GL 2: I was in a local authority school up until I was 18 and I was waiting to hear about - because in Scotland you get 2 years to sit highers and I sat them in fifth year and got a good string of highers but I didn't get the one I needed in fifth year, and I had to wait - it was the only one I was waiting for and I joined Grampian Life as a temp student and they asked me to stay on, - I got it - I got my place in Edinburgh, but I stayed at Grampian Life.</p> <p>[2] Since then I have gone and done some ACII work - at night school and at the moment I'm doing a ... I saw a post advertised for how to get the best out of your direct reports and the person you report to. The Company has been through quite a lot of pain and strain in the last few years and I felt I needed to become more proficient in getting people to work for me and managing my boss if that is the right thing to say, and it has actually gave me quite a lot of confidence and it is fun. The unfortunate thing is that it is on a Saturday and that is my weekend - but it was quite good for me because I have got the label of being a workaholic but I am not, I'm sure I'm not, but Saturday is a quiet day and you can get an awful lot done and it actually focuses you, for a long time we were on permanent overtime - my department is on permanent overtime and I always came in and now I find I'm not as good every second Saturday if I've been in in the morning - I'm not sure if it is something else that has been organised in terms of my free time but I get quite a lot out of it.</p> <p><i>MM: So what was your main reason for undertaking that?</i></p> <p>[3] GL 2: It was because we have been through an awful lot of change and we have turned into quite a dynamic company, that females are sensitive to far more than males, and I think I looked at myself and said that I needed to be able to look at myself. I seem to be getting into confrontation a lot with my direct report for whatever reason that when challenged about it he didn't know he had done it so it was either me being sensitive about it or him being insensitive so there was that and I thought that this was maybe a good thing and I know I have some feedback that I work too long or I work too hard or whatever else and I thought trying to get the best out of the people who report to me or direct reports - maybe that is just what I have got to learn and I'm getting better at it.</p> <p><i>MM: So it was something that really self initiated then - identified what you perceive as a problem?</i></p> <p>[4] GL 2: Yes - I didn't want to go to an in house one.</p> <p><i>MM: Any reasons for that?</i></p> <p>[5] GL 2: No I wanted to do something for me, not for Grampian Life. I wanted to do something for me and actually it was my brother in law who works for Edinburgh who told me about this and I thought this was quite good. I was sent away on a three week course to Sunridge Park once and it was something very very similar and what I found was the confidence level I'm not the most confident person - the confidence level goes up when you are dealing with people who you don't normally deal with, you are not watching your Ps and Qs and if you make a mistake you don't get so embarrassed and I found it a better learning platform to be honest and that was me personally an I'm not saying there is anything wrong with Grampian Life either, I know that.</p>
COG-EXPER	
PHYS-PRESSURE -	
MOT-SELF +	
EMOT-TRAITS +	
PHYS-PRESSURE -	
MOT-SELF +	
MOT-SELF +	
EMOT FEAR -	

Appendix One

<p>CULT-ORG</p> <p>PHYS-PRESSURE</p>	<p>[6] I don't know if you know my background I am the New Business Underwriting Manager and the department has got about 175 staff and Grampian Life have got a lot of awards this year and I think that a lot of it is down to us not all of it but we have contributed a bit we centralised 2 years ago and shut 21 outlets which was quite a stormy time and we brought it in and it all ceased last June and it has actually worked which is good because we are now actually getting the rewards and part of my remit was to ask staff to change and adopt their working practices - we have got a thing called 'plan time', plan time should actually be a partnership but it just turned out that people worked their time and would take the day off - they might work from 8 o'clock, but the work does not come in until 10 - you know that kind of thing. So we changed that within our department and now 90% of our staff start at 10am and finish at 6pm because that is when the mail is opened and there is actually work to do and that is a huge culture change at Grampian Life. So with the result of that - that was 18 months ago and the attitude survey came out quite low for my department so I've now been sent to do a relevant course.</p> <p><i>MM: So you're going away for one now?</i></p>
<p>EMOT-TRAITS</p> <p>-</p>	<p>[7] GL 2: I'm going, not very sure which one mind, they're trying to select one because of me "not really being a people person".</p> <p><i>MM: So it's really been the company who has initiated this one rather than yourself? Do you see any kind of implications for your career aspirations as a result of doing this - any development?</i></p>
<p>EMOT-FEAR -</p>	<p>[8] GL 2: We've all got something to learn and I hope I can learn. If in an organisation, in this building we have 2,200 people, I think that's the right figure. I've got a lot of overtime in this department and they all feel quite strongly about it. Every Friday or Saturday a circular goes round which tells me how many people are in each department. You know, on Friday there was one or two at 5.05pm, but in New Business there was 146. What I'm fighting for is to get staff reward, you know, it's all very well saying, "ah but that's when your hours are" in the department but when you see all the other departments packing up and going home for the weekend, so personally I would dispute that I'm not a people person - I'm very direct.</p> <p><i>MM: I can totally understand what you're trying to do. I mean if the work's there at that time... What other kind of learning styles have you experienced?</i></p>
<p>INTEL-STYLE</p> <p>COG-EXPER -</p>	<p>[9] GL 2: I've been in lots of classrooms. The Grampian Life training department used to be a talk - at learning style where I actually don't think this is the best way for me to learn.</p> <p>[10] I learn better in workshops when you actually have to try it out and it's the same in the department. I can remember when I started, I'll relate this to when I did highland dancing - you obviously get trained the steps and that's fine, you only notice the person that's training you, and I always have to read about it, get shown and practice it - you know so I'm the person who has to get involved and get my hands dirty, make the mistakes and learn from them.</p> <p><i>MM: So that's your preferred method then?</i></p> <p>[11] GL 2: Yes.</p> <p><i>MM: What about other more media based type things, like the CBT or internet things, Video conferencing. Do you get involved with things like that?</i></p>
<p>COG-EXPER -</p> <p>PHYS-TIME/ORG -</p>	<p>[12] GL 2: No, well, CBT I do. If I find the subject interesting, CBT is super. But if you go on a health and safety CBT, or something that's really boring, I find it low. The internet fascinates me, I have it in my office, but I've never had the time to go into it in the office. I find the things I have to go into it for, I use it in my own time at home which is not the most cost effective thing to do, but you know....</p>

Appendix One

<p>INTEL STYLE</p>	<p><i>MM: So do you find formal lecture based things like, tutorials for example, useful or would you rather, as you say, get your hands dirty?</i></p> <p>[13] GL 2 Right, I sat at a genetics forum the other day and the speakers in the first half were superb and I really caught a lot I think but because there was no, yes there is discussion ...well there's a hundred of you in a hall, there's discussion, but it's not the same, and I found that after coming out of it and sitting with the geneticists over dinner, and getting interaction, I learned more. Now most of this came from the lecture, but because you were asking specific questions, you were going that step further and they were making you think "oh but what about this and that" so I found that better learning.</p> <p><i>MM: Aye well it's very hard, you need to be a special type of person to put your hand up in a hall, and for learning in that type of environment it's very hard for a lot of people. I know that, me personally, I wouldn't like it.</i></p> <p>[14] GL 2: And I know that I have to write to learn, yes you get the notes or you get a handout. Say you get a handout after you've taken notes, your notes are your understanding of what was said and sometimes the two don't marry. If your taking notes, you put question marks that make sure you focus.</p> <p><i>MM: Are there any factors that have inhibited you from taking up learning opportunities or inhibited you when you are actually at a learning activity?</i></p>
<p>EMOT-TRAITS</p> <p>EMOT- EVENT +</p> <p>CULT-ORG</p> <p>EMOT-FEAR</p> <p>COG- EXPER-</p>	<p>[15] GL 2: Well, I think I'm quite shy and I have always regretted not going to University, always regretted it. I think I was one of the few female managers when I was made a manager and I wasn't an actuary and I'm the first underwriting manager who hasn't been an actuary. You know, I'm married to an actuary and I take off my hat off to them. What Sunridge Park taught me, when I was promoted to be a manager, I didn't know if I wanted to be one. There was a select group in Grampian Life of grade 12s, there was 12 of us, and these were people who really should have been managers and I was one of these and I found this to be a less intimidating group than managers, and it's funny, whenever I went over to be a manager, I was asked to be a manager and at the same time I was asked to go away on a career development so you were asked to be a manager but you still had to do this career development, which was actually super because it was out of house. But you were never trained to be a manager. You know what I mean, you weren't trained to be a manager. I can remember when I first ran the budgets as an assistant manager. We did a lot of groundwork but we didn't get to see the nuts and bolts of things and all of a sudden it was budget time. I can remember someone saying to me, you'll have to do your budgets and I thought well now.</p>
<p>SITU-ORG -</p> <p>SPECIF-BOSS</p>	<p>[16] I was very lucky because I was a Saturday girl in Woolworth's when I was young and I used to do their accounts for extra money and this was quite a few years before, and all of a sudden I was doing a budget - it was kind of different. I can remember thinking to myself, how the hell do I do this, and I looked and thought, there's no help or nothing, so I phoned up and asked for some training that I could go on quickly or a book to read and was told "och, just copy what the person did last year and up it by whatever you think". I thought, no, you're talking about big money and I said, how?, and he said, "just see what figure comes up". So I went to the previous manager of this, who you've spoken to and said what I'd been told and she says "I'll go through my assumptions with you" and I said, "what were you told, and she said exactly the same as you". But Kay's an actuary, she's a bright girl and because she kept on her own file all the assumptions she had made, it was totally different from just copying, you could see what the assumptions were, and you knew what you were talking about, but since that, I have had some budget training.</p>

A1.7 Thematic Conceptual Matrix for
MOT-BARS - Motivational Barriers to Learning in Central life

MOT-SELF *Motivating yourself to participate or get most from the learning*

- Motivation to take on study
- What else is there in terms of study
- Other things more important in life

MOT-WANT - *Simply don't want to carry on with more learning - formal or informal*

- Glad to finish formal period – no way want to experience those pressures again
- Simply quite happy
- Too much challenge higher in the organisation
- Have experienced such pressure before

MOT-REWARDS - *Rewards (not) worth risk of taking up learning experience*

- Need to know what rewards are available before committing
- Rewards don't justify the commitment

Thematic Conceptual Matrix: Central Life Informants and Motivational Factors and Learning					
Motivational Factors and Learning (Motivational factors related to views on learning and development)			Personal circumstances		
	MOT-SELF Motivating yourself to participate or get most from the learning	MOT-WANT Simply don't want to carry on with more learning - formal or informal	MOT-REWARDS Rewards (not) worth risk of taking up learning experience		Motivational factors leading to potential barriers to learning / manager description
Manager				(Age, sex, quali., mar. status, children, parents, pri. exper., dist., hobbies)	<p>Unmotivated Not motivated as outcomes are unknown</p> <p>Motivated illustrates positive motives towards learning</p> <p>Motivated constrained Has the motivation to participate but other factors cause difficulties</p>
CL 1	10 – Illustration of the tough nature of working and trying to do something extra – for example language classes where inevitably work has to rate high in order of things along with family life. Need to be totally focused to be able to 'pick it up' and fit it in with work and the family'. Good illustration of a manager who wants to learn something new but finds it breaks down because of pressures (3 separate occasions)			Age – 35 quite young but most management at that stage are this age. Successful actuary – risen quite quickly in org – family life – child at primary school.	<p>Motivated constrained manager who has given the example of undertaking language courses on three occasions but has had to stop due to family and work commitments</p>
CL 2		12 – illustration of the types of feeling which maybe apparent after an actuary or other professional qualifies – no desire for further formal learning, but good e.g. of the mentality of this manager who got involved with less formal learning - junior chamber. 10,18,38 – Illustration of where the manager is at this stage in career – 'constant slog' as a result of the time pressures of work and really other things are again more important – after working hard you need that 'mucking around the house with the family'. Indication of the desire to devote time to others not to him! Also sees what happens to peoples lives when they move further up the hierarchy – become married to company	30 – Not really seeing that there are rewards at this stage – totally understandable but there maybe a case for more guidance from the organisation – is this where a mentoring system comes in?	Age – 40 and fact that only recently married are factors which have altered perceptions on important things in life	<p>Unmotivated due to a number of factors – most importantly desire As a successful manager he could move further in the organisation but does not really want the life that this movement would mean where you are devoting an awful lot of time to the company and may neglect other areas of life. In essence the rewards available from moving further up the organisation are not what he wants</p>

CL 3	25 Highly motivated to carry on certainly when considered that he participated in the FPC course motive forwarded for that was to back staff but also the 'put flag up' to say that he is an actuary with FPC maybe needed in future			Successful Actuary, family (2 children and responsibilities in community – youth and church leader	Motivated manager and you get the impression that he is highly ambitious and relishes the challenge of moving in the organisation now that is part of the Prudential group
CL 4	19 good illustration of what you might expect at this level where she has been around 'I feel I know enough thank you very much'. Classic case of getting yourself motivated although knowing that she is 'not dealing with the case because the working world is changing rapidly' 7 Maybe only a hint here where he would like to do an MBA but there is the problem of time and therefore it has not been fully investigated. – Is there enough self motivation there are managers in similar positions doing it ok?			Female. Getting towards the upper reaches of the sample 47 Not highly qualified to act as an important position.	Motivated constrained in that she sees the need but also has some confusion about what it is she should be doing
CL 5	7 – Appears to be quite motivated if need to develop 'you are in charge of your own time and work out your own schedules'. However again some similarities with others where the importance of daily work comes to the fore 26 Stresses the need for managers to be motivated to undertake training and train their own staff – important for the firm and individuals. Again this is an emphasis of the general positive attitude he has			35 – young manager with 2 children Successful – actuary Nothing really indicated that would mark out from other actuaries.	Motivated constrained would like to do an MBA but feels that there are too many other things happening to do it properly so not even investigated the possibility
CL 6	22 Positive and motivated – could not really find any barriers in this respect illustration of possessiveness is his desire to go on and mentor others in the organisation			46 – getting up the age scale but fairly proactive in terms of the kind sort of learning he feels are important to him. Quite a lot of responsibilities in terms of children – (5 in all).	Generally positive about learning and development but fitting into the motivated constrained group of managers who mention the fact that there are other pressures which may stop them from doing what they know they should be addressing
CL 7				50 – top of mid career range. Family finally beginning to become self sufficient. Involved in a whole range of community and personal initiatives outside of work which would be quite time sapping.	Motivated manager feels he has a valid role to play in terms of mentoring and coaching younger managers

CL 8	Nothing really indicating a view towards motives for learning etc more likely to do a course for a real reason but does not seem to have anything that would be important in this context			Young (35) manager who has only worked for SA for 3 months. Again fairly successful with no family and normal outside work interests which one would expect are not too time consuming or formalised	Motivated manager who needs to know what will accrue from any course or learning that i participated in needs to know potential rewards
CL 9	4 partly a motivation problem and partly a perceptual problem here in that she recognises the need to do further learning for example an MBA but also there is the problem of working and studying simultaneously Therefore we could almost see the problem here as not setting oneself up for a fall which will affect motivation		21, 22, 27 – Emphasising the need to be able to see what will accrue from giving time what skills will be enhanced, what will the rewards be?	Again young 36 and very successful manager who has not got children Indications of her feelings in the observed cynicism when asked about hobbies – none. Also this is backed up by the fact she stopped teaching Adults with learning problems	Described herself as being quite risk averse in that she really wants to see the rewards at the end of anything she does reward related in that sense but also indicated that she is considering an MBA But her motivation is constrained by the pressures of working and studying currently
CL 10	5 When on secondment to SAIM didn't really do any formal management development, I wasn't really looking for it, because of the experience of working for a small company where you touch everything maybe got out of way of it and started to value learning more by doing than formally. 15 Not ambitious and therefore sees no point in doing an MBA too much hard work when he does not want to go any further anyway. wants to move forward by doing a good job which automatically means you will get promotion, but if I never get promoted again, I wouldn't be bothered'. Action biased rather than developmental.		15, 16 – little real rewards from doing an MBA and quite happy I think he knows what he needs to do in this organisation now and an MBA is not one of those things because it will not bring him further and he doesn't have a real desire to go any further anyway.	Young 36 successful manager who is interesting from other younger ones in that he appears to be less ambitious One very young child. Hobbies fairly normal in hill walking and sport Appears to be interested in doing job and getting out	Unmotivated in terms of formalised learning and development participation because use content with life and therefore does not want to move further in organisation anyway Realistic in his view about where he wants to go doesn't want to move up therefore why would he do an MBA for example?
CL 11	15 Need to get yourself motivated to do things that are not core to your role learning not really core is the impression you get			Fairly ordinary person who has a family and is successful Probably his views about earning a crust sum up his personal circumstances	Motivated to do his job and if development comes into that then fair enough but not planning to go and do anything probably recognises the constraints there too

CL 12			28 – Point made here about it sometimes being very hard to see actually what the clear opportunity is in the company – ‘it is hard to get the motivation to do that bit extra to go on a training program... a formal qualification well you would think why do I bother’. Again emphasising an earlier point from RA that it is really extra- not core to your work and rewards are the problem here.	Single female manager who has not undertaken any professional qualifications. Interesting comment about hobby (drama) maybe helping in learning in some way e.g. presentation skills.	Motivated to learn but needs to get more guidance of what the potential rewards related to undertaking any earning activity may be
CL 13	12 - Highly motivated – as evidenced in the decision to take on a FPC course and also consciously make the point that she likes to move out with her comfort zone.			Female manager with family responsibilities and quite a high profile position – taking on a professional qualification FPC – connected to fact that she came to Scot Am straight from school. Little in the way of hobbies not surprising really.	Motivated manager illustrated by decision to participate in learning and development at this time.
CL 14		23, 27 – Illustration of not wanting to go on at moment and development participation would mean that she would be going on which would disrupt life balance and does not want the responsibility at present.		Highly successful female manager who has known success very early in career and now has refocused and realigned career objectives in line with family commitments.	Motivated constrained to continue in this vein at present but there is the possibility of doing something in terms of a career break (MSc OP simply has other priorities in life now and therefore does not want to combine work with any study she may do

CL 15			<p>11 - More motivated in terms of personal life and activities there than in work where there appears to be a perception that she does not really know where to go now in terms of learning activity. Again someone who does not really understand what rewards are available at the end for her here (20-23)</p>	<p>Successful, married with family lawyer, who at 47 still shows that she is proactive and keen in terms of training and development. Nothing in home life you feel would interrupt her especially.</p>	<p>Motivated to continue but rewards related questions would like know what is it needed to push on in career at this time</p>
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APPENDIX TWO

Central Life Assurance Company

Central Life (CL) is a leading Life Assurance and Pension provider in the UK market. When the data was collected for this study there were approximately 2000 employed at the head office which is based in a large town located in the Scottish central belt. Central Life was established in the first part of the 19th century and since then has grown, based on mutual ownership¹, to become one of the largest life insurers in the UK. In March 1997 it was reported to have £14 billion funds under management. Another indicator of its size was quoted in the company's official web page in October 1998, which stated that CL 'looked after the savings, investment, protection and pension needs of around 2 million people'.

Undoubtedly the most important event to have happened in CL's recent history was the take over² by the largest life assurance and pension provider in the UK, - Take-over Company (TC), who at the time of the acquisition were reported to have over £110 billion funds under management. This take-over, amid considerable press coverage, was finally completed in March 1997, when an offer of £2.87 billion was accepted by CL's board. In terms of this study, the most significant aspect of the take-over was the intense speculation surrounding the employment and job security of existing employees at the head office. On this issue, CL management stated that the bid from the take-over company contained 'a guarantee that job levels at the Scottish Head Office would be maintained for three years...[and that] ...we [Management Team] expect to increase the number over time' (*The Scotsman* 26/03/1997). The issue of future job security (particularly for those managers in the middle level and mid-career stage) was of predominant interest in this organisation.

A2.1 Organisation Context

In an interview with the Training and Development Manager (T&D Manager), questions on a number of issues were posed to gain an insight on the organisational context.

- CL was taken over in March 1997 and this was viewed as the most important event to have happened in the company's recent history.

¹ Central Life ceased to be a Mutual as a consequence of the 1997 takeover.

² The data collection took place immediately after the takeover by Takeover Company (TC)

- There have been deliberate strategies to streamline the organisation's communication and decision-making processes, which in the past were very bureaucratic and complicated.
- Radical attempts have been made to change the culture so that managers were not so grade or status conscious and the tendency to 'blame' others was removed. However, it was noted that there were still many inconsistencies in relation to these goals.
- A lack of support from top managers in relation to Human Resource Development (HRD) was described (Scepticism towards Investors in People (*IiP*) award). The T&D Manager rated senior management support as critical if HRD strategies are to be successfully implemented.
- A HR policy was to allow managers take more responsibility for identifying and participating in their own development. However it was still realised that the
- Company had a responsibility to provide appropriate assistance. Efforts were being made to support managers' development by linking skill requirements with opportunities available in the Learning Resource Centre.
- The reward strategies of CL were focussed on the managers on the actual contribution to the organisation and to have this contribution rewarded accordingly. The practice of giving a cash bonus for successfully completing learning activities (mostly formal vocational qualifications) was deliberately being eroded.

A2.2 Intrinsic Issues and Learning

In the following sections those barriers to learning that could be manifest as a result of the managers' intrinsic attitudes, behaviour and experiences are discussed with reference to the findings from the first part of the interviews with the fifteen managers in CL.

A2.2.1 Perceived need for participation – Perceptual

a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

Table A2.4 highlights the general findings relating to perceptual issues and participation in learning activities for the fifteen mid career managers. For five managers who were placed in the 'low' category it was concluded that, for various reasons they did not perceive a real need to participate in more learning or development activities.

Two main themes emerged from the interviews with the five managers considered as having perceptual barriers to learning. Firstly there were those who simply felt that they

'knew enough already'. In effect their opinions implied that more learning and development would not enhance their professional lives in any way. The following remarks from one of the managers illustrates such a view:

I've probably been around for so long here that I feel I know enough thank you very much, which is not dealing with the case, because the working world is changing rapidly, our industry is changing rapidly. So probably it's a mental attitude and willingness to change to be honest that are the barriers. CL 4

Another manager's comments similarly illustrated some apathy towards participating in learning and development activities:

The other barrier is I know a manager should not be talking about this but it is almost as if you are waiting for someone else to do it, where someone comes up with a good idea and we all jump on the bandwagon. ...Most people are too busy running their own departments to think about training and development of others. So I am apathetic in myself and I am going to get everyone else apathetic as well! (CL 8)

The second major issue surrounding these managers who were placed in the low category was connected to perceptions on the actual benefits derived from taking part in more formal development opportunities:

Interviewer: So you really learn through experience then?

Yes, I mean when you go on courses (Outward Bound Management Development), I don't find you really learn very much from that. I put a lot of effort in but when I come out, I think, well what have I learned and I guess I learned that I really enjoy abseiling and the company - we had a few good laughs together - but did I learn anything?... I think the course took itself too seriously they tried to do a deep analysis of you, your strengths and weaknesses...bollocks really. It was great fun but I wouldn't particularly want to do it again, once you've done it once, I don't think it benefits you to do it all again (CL 10)

It was important to ask if the personal characteristics and circumstances of these particular managers offered any clues in explaining why they may have held such views on learning and development participation. Four of the managers in this category were male and in terms of age profile, most (four) of these managers were relatively young, being either 40 or below. Three were in fact 35 or 36 years old, whilst the other manager in the group was 47 years old. The fact that the majority of these managers are still relatively young is interesting because one may have expected that such managers would be more proactive and receptive to developmental opportunities.

All of these 'younger' managers had high formal qualifications. Two of the managers were qualified actuaries, one was a chartered accountant and the other manager, aged 36, held a BSc Computational Science degree. The fact that it may take up to five years intensive study to qualify as either an actuary or accountant perhaps helps to clarify why such managers are not particularly interested in further formal development.

As well as looking at the qualifications of the managers it was also important to compare their home life circumstances. All but one of the managers were married but, interestingly, only two of the five had children (one with a pre school child and the other a primary school aged child). This fact is enlightening because often a manager's domestic situation (particularly if they have young children) may be used to explain a lack of interest in further development. In terms of responsibilities or hobbies outside of work, there were no real indications that any of these managers were particularly active in their spare time, which may have explained a lack of interest in participating in learning activities.

b) Managers in medium category (some prospects of participation)

The observations made by the seven managers in this 'medium' propensity group indicated that perceptual barriers to learning could potentially be present for them. The following statement illustrates the common predicament which managers at this stage in their career may have in relation to balancing participation in more formal learning and development with other life and work activities:

Interviewer: Have there been any major constraints for you that have inhibited your taking up of learning activities?

No, it's finding time to do things that I want to do so there've not been any barriers. It's just...I mean I'd quite like to do an MBA and there's loads of things I'd like to do, but they all take time and because work is so busy these days and because people work longer hours and you've got to spend a bit of time with your family, then that doesn't leave a lot of time. (CL 5)

There were four male and three female managers in this medium group. Five were under 40 years old (aged 35 or 36), while the other two managers in this group were 46 and 50 years old. All but one (CL 12) was married and only she and another female manager (CL 9) did not have young or dependant children. Three of the younger managers (35 or 36 years old) had caring responsibilities for children who were either of primary or pre-school age. The more mature managers had older children, the first (46 years old) with three from a previous marriage as well as two younger children (secondary school age). The other manager (50 years old) had three grown-up children who had all been to University, which by his own admission 'has cost him an arm and a leg!' (CL7). Such personal circumstantial facts are interesting because they are consistent with the reasons that these managers gave for not participating in further learning activities.

The qualifications held by these managers were also high. Two of the managers had specific industry qualifications (35 year old manager was an actuary, 46 year old held a Financial Planning Certificate), whilst the others were mostly educated to degree level or held another professional qualification (Chartered Accountancy and Institute of Personnel and Development). In terms of spare time most of these managers had fairly standard

hobbies and pastimes except for the oldest member of the group (CL7), who participated in various activities including folk singing, charity work (Save the Children) and the local bowling club (Director . It is important to understand that, apart from this manager, these managers did not have many activities outside of work. In fact one of the managers indicated that she did not have any pastimes at that particular juncture, pointing out that chances to read were limited: Reading – (laugh *because I just work just now!*) (CL 9, emphasis added)

c) Managers in high category (good prospects of participation)

After analysing the comments made by the other three managers from CL, it was considered that they had few real barriers to learning and were, in fact, very proactive in identifying and participating in further development activities. These three managers were therefore placed in the 'high' category and the following extract typically illustrates the type of attitudes they had towards participation:

Interviewer: How about other learning activities that you have taken part in.

I have done courses for personal development and man management and I have been on a fair number of those and most recently partly for my own development and partly to give some support to the staff as well I did the FPC ... which we offer to the staff here as part of their ongoing development. I have been involved in quite a few of the man management and personnel type courses both from the point of view of being in them and also from having to organise them for some of the other team managers. CL 3)

The three managers who were classified as having few perceptual barriers to learning were slightly older than the average age in the CL sample (40 years old). The oldest was a 48 years old male actuary, another was a 47-year-old female lawyer and the youngest was a 39 years old female, who had joined CL after Higher examinations. The fact that this 39-year old manager, who was now about to embark upon the FPC, had relatively low qualifications perhaps explains her desire to participate in this professional course. All of these managers were married and all had two dependant children (one full time student . An interesting additional comment made by the other more mature manager was that she was 'hooked on evening classes' (CL 15 . An important point to be made here is that the managers in this high category are in similar positions and have similar family, personal and work responsibilities as the other CL managers, yet appear to be more interested in participating in personal learning and development activities.

A2.2.2 Emotional Factors and Learning

In this section the aim is to identify whether emotional barriers to learning such as those described in Chapter Four were present for this managerial group in CL. An additional objective was to find why mid-career managers were 'fearful or insecure' and how that may affect their participation in learning.

a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

Table A2.5 highlights the general findings relating to emotional factors and how they may affect participation in learning activities. Three managers were placed in the 'low' category because their comments illustrated that emotional barriers to learning were present. Two main issues became apparent.

Firstly, these managers conveyed views illustrating their fear of becoming 'exposed' in learning situations or of moving out-with their comfort zones. The views expressed below sum up how such negative emotions may affect participation:

Interviewer: Are you involved in anything at the moment that you would define as learning.

I went on that MD course on my own and away from everyone else in the company and I found that useful because I had a personally challenging experience - personally threatening at times and it was good not to have any colleagues there around to be exposed to. So I enjoyed that process but at the same time I came back and got absolutely no support and no one else had a clue what I had been through because I think I was the first person in fact from the company who ever went on anything like that, so no one had a clue. (CL 2)

Similarly, another noted:

I think the area I am not a risk taker in is in moving outside of HR - if I was offered the opportunity of going and managing a team of people in the pensions area I just don't think I could do it, or would want to do it. Because I would just think could I do a job like that and all those people because here I have got a smallish team and specialist and I am quite familiar with the HR environment so I don't now how risky I am in that respect. (CL14)

The interesting aspect about these two statements is that not only do they outline the managers' emotional fears about both participating in learning activities and taking on another role that may offer developmental opportunities, but also they show a perceived lack of support and structure within the company. Indeed, for one of these managers, it was suggested that in his experience certain colleagues made him feel guilty about being away on developmental courses because, to them, he was 'away playing' (CL 2) when he was not at work. Although a number of the managers in CL mentioned the fact that they had some anxiety regarding the future of the company (this issue is described in more detail in the next sub-section) one manager (CL 2) in particular was negative regarding career direction.

b) Managers in medium category (some prospects of participation in learning)

Eight managers were rated as having a medium propensity in relation to emotions that they displayed towards participation in development activities. The most important issue for these managers were their anxieties surrounding the future. The recent acquisition of CL by a larger company was mentioned by almost half the managers in the sample and it appeared to invoke some trepidation for two managers in this group:

It is difficult to say in the medium term exactly what that [Take over] is going to mean, we clearly have a bigger focus on expenses than we did 5 years ago ... I would be surprised if it does not impact in the next 2 or 3 years. I can't see why the Take-over Company would take us over without actually trying to change the way we operate. (CL 1)

The vast majority of the managers in this group pinpointed a shift in the company's treatment of employees in recent years and for some, the take-over was an integral factor in this change. This issue is discussed in some detail when extrinsic factors are considered but, at this stage, it is important to outline how these perceived changes could induce emotional barriers to learning.

For managers in either the 'medium' or 'low' categories, it was noticeable that some lamented the passing of the old, and more paternalistic, ways and the security that they ultimately provided. In general the difference between those managers classified as being medium, as opposed to the low, was that whilst they did not necessarily welcome the changes taking place in the company, they did acknowledge that they were inevitable and necessary.

Interviewer: How would you describe the organisation's culture?

CL has catapulted itself forward and has become more commercial, more aggressive, more like a company of the 90s, so we've got rid of a lot of that paternalism. I'm not saying the company doesn't care, it's had to move with the times modern companies do care, but they do demand a lot more. (CL 6)

c) Managers in high category (good prospects of participation in learning)

The remaining four managers were felt to have higher prospects of participating in learning activities. After analysing their responses to the various questions, no real emotional barriers to learning were found. For the most part the managers in this group were emotionally assured about changes that were both happening in the organisation and indeed in the wider environment. Both the recent take over and the changes in the company's atmosphere were perceived as favourable developments, which would present further developmental opportunities in the future.

Interviewer: How do you see your career development and what part do you see training and development playing in that?

Appendix Two

Now we are part of the Takeover Company group the possibilities are much greater than they were before, we have eliminated a lot of the constraints that we were operating under so given a reasonably fair wind we could see some dramatic expansion in CL. Personally I would like to see myself being part of that and therefore moving up the career ladder within CL. To do that you have got to demonstrate that you have been successful where you are and if that is on an element of man management or getting a department operating efficiently within budget then any learning opportunities that would help along these things I am all for it. (CL 3)

A2.2.3 Motivational Issues and Learning

The aim in this subsection is to understand what motivates managers in CL to take part in learning activities to categorise managers by levels of motivation in terms of training and development.

a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

As can be seen from Table A2.6, three managers were placed in the 'low' category. It was felt that these managers illustrated relatively little motivation or desire to participate in further learning activities. Two main themes underlined the comments made by the informants. For two of the managers (CL 2 and 10) there appeared to be a lack of ambition relating to upward movement in the organisation. These managers appeared to be concerned that, if they were to take positions further up the organisational hierarchy, they would risk damaging their current lifestyle.

Continuing to work on up is another option but I think that that is a goal that I don't have, simply because I think that there is a lot more to life than work and when I look at the committed and dedicated lives that executive and corporate managers lead where they really do not eat, breath or sleep other than CL. You know J Bloggs the Managing Director was saying the other day at lunch that he was playing golf at the weekend and he hadn't played for 18 months or something like that and I said that's sad. (CL 2)

For these managers, the perceived 'personal sacrifice' in moving further up the organisation was undesirable at such a point in their careers. Interestingly, two managers wanted to continue with their jobs while avoiding the very developmental opportunities that might lead to promotion. An additional theme to emerge from the other manager (CL 4) in this low category relates to the potential rewards available after participating in learning and development opportunities. Through her comments, this manager illustrated her confusion and ambiguity about what exactly the potential benefits might be in the company.

It is interesting to note that the three managers who communicated motivational barriers to learning were also placed in the 'low' category when perceptual barriers to learning were explored. This factor clearly illustrates that there is an overlap between the different intrinsic factors. As has already been outlined, barriers to learning are 'not

mutually independent but [...] they may exist in a closely interrelated state of combination.’ (Temporal and Boydell, 1981: 16).

In terms of the personal characteristics and circumstances for these managers, it was interesting to note that two of the three managers who displayed low motivation to participate in learning activities were either 40 years of age or younger (the other was 47 years old).

These personal circumstantial facts are not as one might have expected and therefore questions are raised as to why exactly such managers, who are relatively young and have few domestic responsibilities may not be motivated to participate in further learning activities. The most important of these questions is related to the effect the unpredictable external environment may have on the perceived learning and development needs of mid-career managers in this organisation. Having discussed the comments from three managers from one of the organisations studied, it would appear that there is frequently no real desire for the increased pressure and responsibility that comes with progressing further up the organisation.

b) Managers in medium category (some prospects for participation in learning)

As can be observed from Table A2.6, the majority (nine) of managers in CL were placed in this medium category in relation to motivational factors and participation in learning. Essentially, for such managers, although they clearly communicated their desire to participate, certain factors (most often connected to work pressures or family commitments) appeared to constrain or temper their motivation for learning and development activities. As communicated by many of these managers when the other intrinsic factors were investigated (perceptual and emotional), participating in learning activities proved difficult for these managers at this stage of their careers due to family responsibilities. Although they appeared to understand the need to continue to participate and continually move forward in their careers, the risk of participating (‘setting oneself up for a fall’) appeared to be too great because of the potential disruption of extrinsic factors:

I think I recognise as a woman with family commitments you do have to compromise for something and I know that is straying away from learning but it is a very very real issue for me and for my contemporaries in the same situation and I think we – we women have engineered it Twenty years ago it was expected that you stay at home but now you are expected to go to work and trying to have it all, I don’t think it is possible. CL14)

As well as the above factors relating to the potential disruption which family and working life might cause, certain other managers (CL 8, 12 and 15) clearly had problems connecting rewards with learning. For these managers, such problems arose because they

were unclear about potential rewards or future career direction that might accrue from participating in certain learning activities:

I enjoy learning and I have taken the initiative myself to do Law Society Continuing Professional Development courses where you have so many hours to put in every year... However, I really don't know where my career is going from here. I find it quite hard to pin point courses or activities what specific training I need and what I could get where the gaps are – do I need more financial knowledge, do I need more specialist management skills... at a senior level you do it for your own staff but no one really does it for you, you are expected to look after your own career but I don't know where you would go for the courses. (CL 15)

c) Managers in high category (good prospects for participation in learning)

Three managers were grouped together in this high category after analysing their interview comments, which illustrated that they had no apparent motivational barriers to learning. Perhaps the most important findings related to this fact are that not only did they communicate their commitment and enthusiasm for learning through their statements, but that they actually provided concrete evidence through their actions. In the case of two of these managers, this was particularly apparent because they had either recently completed or were about to embark upon the FPC qualification. As the following quotations illustrate both of these managers felt that there were personal rewards for doing the qualification and, although they were likely to have faced the same potential constraints from both work and family responsibilities as others, these factors did not appear to deter them:

My main motive for doing the FPC was to give the backing to the people out there (Staff), I viewed that as important to do that, but at the back of my mind I thought well maybe someone is looking for an actuary with a FPC along the line and if I have stuck a flag up saying I'm your guy (CL 3)

And:

I have thought about it (FPC) for the last couple of years and you never get round to it, and I thought well we are expecting staff to do this and I am thinking well how can you ask staff to do this when you are not prepared to put yourself out and do it yourself.... That will be a challenge for me to do it because I have a busy schedule, and trying to slot something like that in will be difficult for me... it is always easy to stay within your comfort zone. (CL 13)

For the other manager who was placed in this group, although he did not have the same evidence to illustrate his participation in learning and development as the other two, he communicated very clearly his motivation to develop through undertaking a mentoring type role in the organisation.

A2.2.4 Previous Learning Experiences– Cognitive (General)

The aim in these final subsections was to discern whether barriers to learning were apparent as a result of previous learning experiences. Firstly, their experiences of learning from compulsory up to third level higher education are analysed in this section and, in

Section A2.2.5 their work related learning experiences are discussed. Tables A2.7 and A2.8 summarise what the various managers said about both the compulsory or third level learning and also more vocational work related learning.

a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

Table A2.7 illustrates the three categories of previous experiences of compulsory education and learning activities up to third level higher education. From the table, it can be seen that only one manager was placed into this low category as a result of comments on compulsory education, where previous experience had deterred her from attending university:

Interviewer: Is there any kind of aspect of particular event that stands out in education?

... Probably sitting exams, the highers, that was pretty traumatic and it put me right off going to university to be honest. I would have been intending to do that but I thought I can't be bothered doing any more of this. (CL 4)

These comments show how a poor experience of formal compulsory learning can inhibit progression to higher level education. It is interesting to note however that this manager intimated that she had participated in 'some professional qualifications' (CL 4), although she did not state whether this involved taking formal examinations. In general, a theme highlighted in the interview with this manager was that she felt informal learning activities were more appropriate for her and, hence, valued practical developmental activities such as secondments.

b) Managers in medium category (some prospects for participation in learning)

Six managers were placed in this medium category and the general view of these managers was that, although they were glad they had gone through third level education, they were relieved to have finished their courses and appeared to dislike certain aspects of university life. The most important was related to the emphasis on formal examinations and the relatively unstructured learning methods employed, which often appeared to be at odds with the way things were learnt at school.

For one manager in particular (CL 14), such experiences influenced her approach to managing employees in her department. The comments below illustrate her desire to ensure that future learning activity for her team is better structured and that employees understand the learning outcomes:

So we have just appointed 3 more people to do IPD courses – one who is reporting to me and 2 others in HR and the first thing we have said to them is that we need to sort out a learning contract and what

Appendix Two

do you need from us and what can we expect from you? How are you going to try to apply the learning to our office so I think that is really important and I wish I had had that level of support when I was doing mine (CL 14)

c) Managers in high category (good prospects of participation in learning)

It can be appreciated through simply referring to Table A2.3, outlining the CL managers' profiles that the vast majority of these managers are very highly qualified. With this in mind, it is not surprising that very few of these managers forwarded comments to illustrate bad experiences in formal educational activities (including third level higher education). Therefore, few barriers to learning were detected:

I was educated in what we might call private school all the way through. I was in the top layer the whole way through. I never found that I had to try all that hard and learning was something that came fairly easily and knowledge stuck fairly easily, and it was pretty easy going for me most of the time. I went through the English O Level, A Level system, where I emerged with something like 11 O Levels and 4 A Levels all at the top grade. Then I went on to the University of Oxford to study Mathematics. ... It was the natural flow and I guess I arrived at University without ever having thought about it. (CL 2)

As well as illustrating the extent to which the majority of these managers were well qualified (all but three went to university), the statement above also highlights an important point. For the majority, failure was an alien concept. In fact, the above manager who volunteered the above comments also divulged that: *'the first shock that ever came to the system was failing my driving test for the first time, because up until then I really had had no problem with learning'* (CL 2).

A2.2.5 Previous Learning Experiences– Cognitive (Vocational)

a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

Three managers were placed in the low category as their previous experiences of work related learning activities were felt to have the potential to inhibit participation in further developmental activities. Two of these managers spoke of their reluctance to undertake further work related learning activities because they were too *'sheep dippy'* in nature and hence did not address individual skill requirements. The comments below neatly illustrate this view:

My least favoured training is the in house training programs, which are not about specific technical issues. They are about being a better manager, and it is a case of making one size fit all and I just don't think it is practical enough. It is too many people sitting around in classrooms theorising when we all know what the theory is of what makes a good manager. CL 9

As Table A2.8 reveals, the two other managers (CL 2 and 10) displayed different problems regarding their previous work related development activities. For example, one (CL 2) revealed how he felt unsupported (similar to comments forwarded in emotional

issues section) following participation in a work related management development course and how this made him reluctant to undertake such an activity again. All three of these managers were well educated, to at least degree level, and two had professional qualifications (actuary and accountant). This would indicate that there was no issue in terms of ability levels regarding these more formal types of learning interventions.

b) Managers in medium category (some prospects for participation in learning)

Nine managers were located in this section as a result of their comments regarding experiences of work related learning activities. Although their vocational learning experiences had been quite varied in nature they could potentially inhibit further participation. For three of the managers in this group, who held professional qualifications (CL 1, 5, 8), their experiences of correspondence type courses (the main delivery method for actuarial and accountancy qualifications) was mixed. As the comments from one of these managers illustrated, one of the main problems with studying for these exams was the work-study balance issue: *'I got a job as an actuarial student at Britannia Life and started doing actuarial studies in 1985 and that was easily the hardest work that I had to do because I had to study and work at the same time.'* (CL 5)

Another prominent issue relates to views on the actual usefulness or otherwise of certain company organised MD courses like Outward Bound or Leadership Development courses etc. Of those managers (approximately half of the sample in CL) who had been on these types of company initiated management development courses, the general consensus was that real life management skills were not enhanced through such activities. Even though the majority did enjoy such activities, the implication was that, given the choice, they would be reluctant to participate in them again.

In terms of personal circumstances and characteristics it was hard to find any real patterns emerging, because this group represented the majority of informants. In terms of age and sex for example the managers ranged from 35 right up to 47 years old. There were six male and three female managers in the group. These managers held a wide range of educational qualifications, from those who had joined straight from school, through to those with higher education examinations and finally, actuaries or accountants.

c) Managers in high category (good prospects of participation in learning)

As can be seen from Table A2.8, three of the managers were placed in the high category with respect to work related development issues. In the main, these three managers were

positive about both the in house training courses and external learning activities, which they had encountered. It was felt that no barriers to these managers continuing to participate in learning and development activities could be attributed to their previous experiences of work related learning events.

As can be appreciated, these three managers were adjudged to be generally positive in their attitudes towards learning. However, as can be seen from the narratives attached to each manager, they also suggested that these activities could have been improved in several ways. For example CL 3, who had undertaken the actuarial qualification expressed that, in the past, the courses were not delivered very professionally. It is interesting to note that he has performed the role of tutor since qualifying and he felt that his own experience has helped him in this capacity. For the other two managers, although keen to participate further in work related activities, there were perceived problems with guidance and support in the organisation, which might compromise certain activities (These aspects are returned to in Section A2.3.2, when the MD culture is discussed).

A2.3 Extrinsic Issues and Learning

A2.3.1 Organisational culture

In this subsection, the manager's views in relation to CL's culture are explored in detail. The most important aspects that each manager communicated about the organisational culture are shown in Table A2.9.

There was unanimity from all managers in CL that the culture was continually evolving and that this process of change has accelerated over the last decade. In very simplistic terms, the culture appeared to have moved from a traditional financial services organisation model, based on paternalism and job security for employees, to something more akin to those found in other industries. A feature of this modern culture is that employees no longer benefit from such a benevolent atmosphere, where their positions are not so secure and, their performance more closely monitored. The way that the managers viewed this culture change was felt to have a bearing on their propensity to participate in learning.

a) Managers in negative category (organisation culture inhibits learning)

As mentioned above, the main issue surrounding the organisational culture in CL is its rapid change over recent years. For the seven managers (see Table A2.9) placed in the

negative category, two major themes emerged from their comments regarding this rapid culture change.

Three managers appeared to be particularly wary about the implications of the culture change for employees. One of these managers felt that, in his 18 years of employment at CL the culture had moved in a negative direction and employees, in his opinion, appeared to be less important in the general scheme of things:

Interview 1: Could you perhaps just describe the organisational culture?

It has changed a lot in the 18 years since I have been with the company, it used to be a small family caring atmosphere and we are having to change because of external competitive pressures. But we are becoming very much more business results - profit focused and very much less people focused, we say we are customer focused but we are not really doing that and it is profit focused at the end of the day ... I think we are doing a lot of things that look like we are people focused, skills profiling initiatives which you might have heard about, Management Development courses, Learning Resource Centres. We're not actually providing people the space to do these things because we are focused on the shifting the work. So I'm afraid the culture is now very much based on results and profits and we have done a number of things that have sort of distanced the company from the people side of it, all in the name of efficiency. (CL 2)

Another manager had similar concerns about the effects that the change and increasing emphasis on costs were likely to have on employees. He could sense anxiety, in terms of job-security, amongst middle management, where the pressure to deliver was greatest. This manager felt that managers in such positions were too pre-occupied with performance to actually think about their own development and future ambitions:

Certainly I think probably there are pressures on the middle management in the sense that they might not be as marketable as they think they are. So it is just a matter of trying to keep your nose clean which might stifle all your ambitions as well, because when you are too busy looking over your shoulder you are more liable to walk into a lamp post one day. A wee bit of a fear factor, in that the older a person is there may be more fear and it will take a few years here to tell people that we have been through worst. It has not helped maybe 2.5 years when we did do a restructuring and delayering exercise and you know it takes a long time to get back that confidence as well. (CL 7)

A third manager in this group illustrated the very complex nature of the organisation culture in CL, which appeared to be riddled with inconsistencies and ambiguities. What appeared to be particularly disturbing was the particularly ruthless nature in which some managers had been dismissed:

Interview 1: Have you got any everyday examples of the culture.

In the last 2-3 years there have been 3 or 4 out of the 8 (Senior Managers) who have been in the office at 4 o'clock and they were gone by 5. That was completely alien to the Central Life culture and nothing like that had ever happened before so people here would point to those examples and say 'oh this company here they are becoming so ruthless'. I would say how much were those people earning and, how much value were they giving and, I would say well it 10 years overdue, so that is one example of

Appendix Two

the new culture it is getting like America in that. At the same time we still have a manager's car park, we still have directors bathrooms... we are still going through a transition, which in this case was on one extreme very old, fashioned and paternalistic and commercially enviable because of that. That's an extreme, but I think it is inevitable that you can swing too much the other way. I mean *I d n't want t w rk for an organi ation where people ju t di appear*, so I hope we will swing back the other way and we will get the balance somewhere in the middle. CL 9

Although some of the comments from the other managers in this negative propensity category were similar to those outlined directly above, the general perception of four managers suggested that the culture change did not extend far enough in the company. For example, two of the female managers (CL 12 and 14) felt that elements of what they described as the 'blame culture' were still present, even though there were deliberate attempts to remove it. For these two managers, the existence of such a culture stifled innovation and was an unfavourable climate for development. They mentioned the fact that there was still too much grade consciousness and that more senior managers, in particular, were still reluctant to let go of power and control, which again negatively affected employees:

The culture of CL is very dated - very difficult to move out of the rut I would call it. Anything you would want done or changed takes absolutely ages because you have got to get it through the red tape machine, and it gets to the frustrating stage and you think why bother. I think a lot of it is lip service to get anything done and I don't know sometimes I think you have to concentrate on the trivia and forget about the important issues and what is going to bring the company forward. (CL 13)

Interviewer: Do you think there has been a change in contract for people at your level - in the middle to senior management?

Undoubtedly - the company wants its pound of flesh and more. Especially in the service areas here where people are working silly hours ...definitely presenteeism is rife and it is first in and last out and I feel quite strongly about that. I don't believe people can give their best with a 12 hour day 6 days a week. It takes it's toll on them and also on the quality of the work that they do, some people may be prepared to do it at a certain point in their career ...to get to a particular level and have that on your CV. I can see why people might have these short term objectives. But to have everyone working in that culture all the time is very damaging to morale I think - it shouldn't be necessary with proper resourcing (CL 15)

b) Managers in neutral category (elements of culture undermine learning)

Six of the managers were placed in the medium category in relation to their perceptions of the company culture and its effect on participation in learning activities. The distinguishing feature separating them from those who were placed in the 'medium' category was their pragmatism regarding the culture change in the organisation. Basically, these managers appeared to realise that there was a real need for change in the organisation and that, although at times such change could be potentially uncomfortable for both themselves and their colleagues, they appeared to realise the necessity of change in today's tough financial services environment.

The essence of the comments forwarded by these managers regarding the culture change in CL was the perceived need for balance. It became apparent that these managers could effectively see that there were positive and negative repercussions for the employees as a result of the planned efforts to change the culture. For example one manager (CL 1) felt that, as a result of the less paternalistic nature of the company, staff/management relations had undoubtedly suffered. In the interview with this manager the most insightful thing that he said about this was that, from his view, employees were ‘treated fairly.....[but that]... I think the staff have moved away from that being a given and they are always looking for the hidden agenda of what we do.’

c) Managers in positive category (organisation culture facilitates learning)

It was notable that only two managers were placed in the positive category with regards to the culture that was in place at CL. What was interesting was not only their pragmatism about the need for change in the organisation, but also their enthusiasm for the shift in culture, which they appeared to believe was wholly appropriate for the future benefit of the organisation. In essence, both of these managers felt that the company had a good balance between the old traditional elements of the culture and those that would make it more commercially successful in the future:

I would say we still are a fairly paternalistic company although some things are getting chipped away at the edges although that is a matter of course - just operating in the current world that we are working in. We still have a final salary pension scheme whereas other companies might have swapped from final salaries to contribution where the employee rather than the employer then take the risk. ... I don't know really how much further we really should be going, because we can't afford to be lax. On Friday there we were having a discussion on team managers ... compulsory overtime was something that we never really contemplated ... I certainly don't want it to be an Alcatraz but it cannot be a holiday camp because if it is like that it will not be a business very long. So it cannot be a holiday camp and everybody thinking it is a great laugh because it is not a great laugh there are demanding policyholders out there, who would be abhorred to think we were treating it like that. (CL 3)

And similarly:

Interviewer: Would you describe it as being paternalistic now or not?

I would say it is still - I think it is less paternalistic than it was but in comparison to other companies there is still an element of paternalism to it, and people still feel differently about CL to other companies. I think the people who have been here for a while think of it as an old family rather than simply place of work. ... You just have to go out and speak to the people in (the local town) and the perception is that CL is a good place to work and it looks after its people. (CL 5)

A2.3.2 MD culture

In this section some of the cultural issues are taken further and discussed more specifically with respect to learning in CL (See Table A2.10).

a) Managers in negative category (MD culture inhibits learning)

From Table A2.10 it can be seen that the comments from seven of the managers illustrated negativity towards the management development culture in place in CL. One of the main issues raised by these managers was the provision of opportunities in the organisation.

Across the sample, the term 'sheep dip' arose frequently as a description of the type of MD opportunities available in the organisation. For the managers in this particular group, such activities were perceived to be poor for both the managers involved and the organisation as a whole. Several pointed out that such 'sheep-dip' type development programmes were inadequate on two levels. Firstly, the participant may have a negative experience whilst actually partaking in the activity which could affect future participation. Secondly, the fact that training was perceived to be 'sheep dippy' could ultimately cause reluctance to participate, as it was not tailored to their needs:

A couple of years ago there was another fairly major MD program which was pretty sheep dippy in it's approach in that the company identified 12 areas that they felt the good managers in CL should be successful in and sent us on a 3 week course which was picking up certain aspects of that. Basically everyone went through the program and that 130 managers maybe. ... It was the same program so it was very variable attention and interest in various bit of the program. For example our sales staff for a few bits of it, you could see them turning off because at the same time they were going through a similar program which was covering a few of the same things. (CL 1)

The type of MD culture that some managers perceived to be in place was poor, where programmes are neither followed up nor supported well enough for them to work effectively. In general, these managers thought support from both senior management and colleagues in their departments for participation in learning and development activities was inadequate. Often the term 'lip-service' arose when managers were asked to describe the support the company gives to learning and development:

Interviewer: How would you describe the culture in relation to T&D?

Maybe not lip service, it is maybe being generous to say lip service, it was really left to me to have a look at my departments training needs etc. which I think is probably the same elsewhere. It is not high on the agenda - they talk about people and in the business plan there are several areas the People, the Performance, the Sales, which is a big issue. They talk about the people but they don't subdivide the people into other headings like developing the people or the type of people who we actually need throughout the organisation. Which is lip service because they mention People but they don't actually formally talk about how to train them (CL 8)

In terms of more specific issues, several of the managers were particularly concerned about the perceived level of support for managers who were involved in informal mentoring schemes, or in tutoring students taking professional examinations (CL 2).

Several managers (CL 1, 7, 10 & 13) mentioned the lack of support received from senior managers in relation to mentoring responsibilities. It is interesting to note that the

manager from the HRM Department (CL 14) also acknowledged the failings in the organisation in relation to the issue of mentoring proposing that this may be due to the lack of a formal policy. As far as she was concerned, these long serving managers did have *'a lot of experience that they could bring'*, but she felt their skills were under utilised in terms of mentoring, the attitude being that *'it is almost like people are waiting on them to retire'*. (CL 14)

The main concern for two others was the general lack of opportunity and, by implication, encouragement to get involved in secondments:

I went and moved on a secondment initially to Central Life Investment Managers and that was in 1993. I stayed there for 4 years and I've actually just returned here, at the end of 1997.... So that in itself was a very good learning experience, it got you away from the environment here which to an extent can be a bit narrow in its focus...and that's just natural because we can't have 100 managers sitting round a table saying well what are we going to do today.... Unless you give yourself a kick up the backside to go and do that, you don't get the opportunity. (CL 10)

b) Managers in neutral category (elements of MD culture undermine learning)

The comments made by seven of the managers in the organisation indicated that, similar to those in the previous category, they had certain reservations about the culture in terms of learning and development. However, these managers, did not appear as negative towards the culture as their colleagues discussed above in the previous category.

The most significant aspect to emerge for these managers was their realisation that much of the onus was on the individual when it came to participating in development opportunities. Although all of the managers in this grouping acknowledged the importance of self-development and accepted that they needed to be proactive, some still felt that the organisation could assist by clarifying the general direction that they should take. As the following statements illustrate, the managers felt that, while support and direction was getting better, it was still not perfect:

Interviewer: In terms of Management Development and Training how would you describe the culture?

It is getting better, at least on paper the appraisal system and the objective setting system are taking into account personal development for the first time. For the last year or so we have been encouraged to treat that as a fairly important part of staff development but not to managers particularly. I think it tends to be up to managers themselves as to how they see their career developing and what training they want. (CL 15)

Another manager intimated that the organisation already utilised a good model to aid the development of managers, i.e. that for actuarial students. This manager hinted that the model could be used across the organisation to develop others:

Actuarial students have always been taken very seriously. ... They have always had a mentor system, they have certain career paths that they go on, they have a formal secondment program which I think is a great way to learn. They have a very clear career path and career progression and I think that is lacking in other areas ... I think if we were to apply the principles which we apply to the actuarial training and development we would not be far short because a lot of it is in place for them. (CL 12)

Other managers in this grouping had concerns about the opportunities and level of support that was given to learning and development. Although not as concerned as those who were placed in the negative category, two managers in particular did feel that there was undoubtedly potential for improvements. For example, one manager thought that, whilst the recently established Learning Resource Centre was generally good for learning, there was still a need to address other fundamental provision and structural issues in relation to learning:

Interviewer: In terms of management development and training how would you describe the culture?

I think there is a fair dedication to development and training ... there is a real intent that managers have got to be trained and developed.

Interviewer: Say for example - taking that disciplinary thing - would you ever go down to the training resource centre to try to find something relevant for it?

I wouldn't go down personally - I would phone and maybe ask if they had anything useful or related to it, but ideally it is much better - thinking from my own point of view - it is much better if you can sit down with someone and lead them through it and explain from personal experience about what you have got to be aware of when you are doing it.... Ideally you want a course that a person can ask the questions and they don't understand that bit or look at another example. (CL 3)

c) Managers in positive category (MD culture facilitates learning)

Only one manager was placed in the positive category in relation to the organisational culture surrounding managerial learning and development. Essentially, as far as this 47 year old female manager from the Life Services Department was concerned, there were no real barriers to learning that could be traced back to the level of opportunities or support available in the organisation. From Section A2.2.1, it can be seen that this manager also felt very positive about the culture in general.

An interesting aspect of her comment was the assertion that in her perception, learning opportunities were more than adequate for employees at all levels:

Interviewer: In terms of formal facilities for these looking at these things, say you or any of your managers wanted to look at these courses is that well provided for here?

Yeah, traditionally we had a large training and development department - it is not large in size now but in scope. ... We also have just recently started up a learning centre, the stuff is available and, in addition to that we have external suppliers who are constantly sending information in so there are external seminars (CL 4)

In terms of learning, this manager felt that, particularly at Team Leader and Team Member levels, there was a great deal of learning taking place and that managers at that level were very keen to participate in anything that was available. As far as she was concerned, the effects of the more insecure external environment had meant that employees were much more willing to participate in learning. She stated that she used to have the 'devils own job trying to get people interested in doing, for example, Associated Institute of Chartered Insurance exams'. (CL 4)

A2.3.3 Physical Resource issues

The aim in this section is to attempt to understand whether these managers felt that factor relating to physical resources (time, geographical location, and costs) played any role in explaining non participation in learning and development activities. Table A2.11 illustrate briefly the various viewpoints of these managers in relation to physical resources issues.

a) Managers in negative category (resource issues inhibit learning)

For four of these managers, physical time constraints were felt to be the major factor that superseded all others in explaining why they felt negative about the whole issue of having sufficient physical resources to participate further in learning and development. These managers were largely concerned about the limited time for development because of the number of hours spent working:

It's just higher and higher pressure during the day here where you tend to come in earlier and go home later and there is weekend working to be done, certainly no half days off or time out to reflect. It really is just a constant slog and therefore when I get home at night I'm tired. (CL 2,)

In such an atmosphere, it was not surprising that managers were inevitably forced to sacrifice training to time pressures:

Interviewer: Do you think there is anything that inhibits your learning activity or has done in the past?

Time is always a factor when you are working full time it is always difficult ... you must take time to do these things, very often it is the first thing to go, and your boss is the first person to say you can't go on that course or they still expect the deadlines although you have got all this pressure. (CL 12)

Although time constraints were cited as a physical resource which was in short supply, there were other physical resource factors which appeared to influence the decisions of managers. Many courses and opportunities were located in geographically challenging locations, while the expense involved was often considered a disincentive to attending. In the main, there appeared to be a perception amongst managers across the entire sample in CL that there was a clear bias for external industry seminars and courses to be located in London or the South of England. There was no clear pattern with regards to this issue, as most of the managers found this scenario to be at worst prohibitive and at best, an inconvenience. The comments from one manager in this negative propensity group suggested, there had been no real effort to find potentially useful courses due to time pressures (CL 9). Another manager in this negative category underlined the geographical problems:

Well I have never been to a conference in Scotland and I think that says it all. In my entire professional career in fact I have never been to a course in Scotland, it would be great if we could because it would make it a lot more accessible and easier for me. (CL 12)

During the interview, the managers were asked to comment on the most important external pressures for the industry and how they impact on the company. Essentially, the responses summed up why many of the managers felt the way they did about the physical pressures present for them:

There is a shortage of chartered accountants across all industries but in particular the Financial Services industry, ... in the main the brunt of that has fallen on middle managers and the first impact was if you like that more and more of us have started working 12 or 14 hour days and 6 and 7 day weeks. (CL 9)

b) Managers in neutral category (certain resource issues undermine learning)

The six managers who were considered to forward neutral views found that resource issues related to time and cost were a hindrance to their further participation. However, they exhibited a more pragmatic and positive approach towards the future than those in the previous group did.

In common with many of their comments on the changes that were taking place in the company's culture, there was an inherent understanding of the need for balance. Many of the managers realised the need to work harder and put in longer hours, but also recognised the need to have time for both their own development and their personal lives as well. The main message was that the effects of time constraints were prohibitive to enhanced learning activity and frequently attending to ones work took precedence.

The comments of two of these managers sum up the situation concerning physical resource (time) constraints. In the first example, the manager acknowledges that he becomes too caught-up in short-term issues and, hence, his participation in learning and development suffers:

Interviewer: Could you sum up any of the constraints that you feel are present both for yourself and in the organisation in terms of development?

I would say from a personal point of view I would need to discipline myself to bring training onto the agenda because I get embroiled in fire fighting and trying to be proactive in terms of selling this department and making sure that people are doing the work that needs to be done. So I am almost a barrier to myself because I don't think enough about what I need - I think too much about other people. (CL 8)

The other manager (CL 5) also acknowledged that, in the past, time constraints had prevented his participation in learning activities. However he was hopeful that, as the organisation moved into '*calmer waters*' (CL 5), there would be a chance for him and others in the organisation to refocus and redress the balance in relation to both learning and personal lives.

Appendix Two

The issue of costs and logistical problems were apparent for managers across the categories. Several of the managers in this 'neutral' group in particular, felt that the fact that many learning events were geographically removed from them was a problem:

Interviewer: What is your view of learning opportunities for you if in terms of seminars and conferences in the Scottish central belt and where CL is situated?

Most of them are orientated in London and it costs an absolute bloody fortune. You get the odd one which are usually at a lower level like negotiation seminars and day courses and they are great and they are based in Stirling or Aberdeen or other places and they are very good value for money. . . Some of these conferences are extortionate for what they are. (CL 7)

And:

You can bet that 95% of them are held in London and I think it's frustrating and irritating and they're very expensive to go to, ... you can't justify going down to London 2 or 3 times a month for a seminar. If it was in Edinburgh it would be much easier to justify going. you can take out the cost of airfares for one thing. So they can easily cost over £100 for a one day seminar and to justify that is very difficult. (CL 6)

c) Managers in positive category (resource issues not a factor for learning)

Although acknowledging that time and resources were often scarce for participating in learning activities, as relatively senior managers, they ultimately had a responsibility to deal with such constraints.

In effect, these five managers were unwilling to use lack of time or other physical resource issues as an excuse for non participation in learning and development activities. The following comments were indicative of the general feelings that were apparent amongst managers in this high propensity to participate grouping:

If learning becomes part of it, you just set a time in your time manager and you do it. So it's an excuse to say you haven't got time rather than to just confront the real situation which is that you have got other things that you are making a higher priority. (CL 3)

And:

For me personally it is down I guess to a busy schedule. time constraints and what you have got to do to deliver here. So I guess that is a personal thing that I have got to overcome if I want to develop further, and trying to get a balance between work and home is always a problem. (CL 13)

As can be seen from these comments, the managers in this category exhibited good prospects for participating in learning and development activities, as they were pragmatic enough to realise the importance of continuing development. The key challenge for these managers and their colleagues was to elevate the status of learning activities to a level equivalent to that of day to day work.

A2.4 Summary and Conclusions

This section summarises the key findings and conclusions in CL in relation to:

- Intrinsic issues

- Extrinsic issues
- Final remarks

A2.4.1 Intrinsic Factors: General Conclusions

Table A2.1 below illustrates the position of each manager in CL in relation to propensity to learn according to each of the intrinsic factors and learning. From the table some interesting conclusions can be drawn regarding intrinsic factors and their affects on learning. Each barrier is now discussed in turn in order to extract the main points of interest:

Table A2. 1 - Intrinsic Factors and Learning for Managers in Central Life

Mgr	Perceptual	Emotional	Motivational	Cognitive (General)	Cognitive (Vocational)	Ratings (Total)
CL 1	L [1]	M [2]	M [2]	H [3]	M [2]	10
CL 2	L [1]	L [1]	L [1]	H [3]	L [1]	7
CL 3	H [3]	H [3]	H [3]	H [3]	H [3]	15
CL 4	L [1]	M [2]	L [1]	L [1]	M [2]	7
CL 5	M [2]	H [3]	M [2]	H [3]	M [2]	12
CL 6	M [2]	M [2]	M [2]	M [2]	M [2]	10
CL 7	M [2]	M [2]	H [3]	M [2]	M [2]	11
CL 8	L [1]	M [2]	M [2]	H [3]	M [2]	10
CL 9	M [2]	L [1]	M [2]	H [3]	L [1]	9
CL 10	L [1]	M [2]	L [1]	M [2]	L [1]	7
CL 11	M [2]	H [3]	M [2]	M [2]	M [2]	11
CL 12	M [2]	M [2]	M [2]	M [2]	M [2]	10
CL 13	H [3]	H [3]	H [3]	H [3]	H [3]	15
CL 14	M [2]	L [1]	M [2]	M [2]	M [2]	9
CL 15	H [3]	M [2]	M [2]	H [3]	H [3]	13
	H= 3[20%] M= 7[47%] L= 5[33%]	H= 4[27%] M= 8[53%] L= 3[20%]	H=3 [20%] M= 9[60%] L= 3[20%]	H=8 [53%] M=6 [40%] L= 1[7%]	H= 3 [20%] M= 9[60%] L= 3[20%]	

a) Perceptual

- Majority of sample in medium (47%) or low (33%) category.
- Common features of low and medium category – young managers (under 40 years old) with high formal qualifications.
- Negative perception of potential outcomes and ‘knew enough already’ attitude for those in low category.
- Small percentage of sample (20%) in high category – more mature managers with dependant children.

b) Emotional

- Majority of sample in medium (53%) category.
- Barriers for low category – fear of exposure, working outwith comfort-zone (Generally young, married managers)
- Issues of job security following company takeover for medium category – long serving managers with job specific qualifications.
- High category managers (generally young males with transferable qualifications) confident of opportunities within company as result of takeover.

c) Motivational

- Only 20% perceived no barriers (high category) – Incorporated oldest managers in sample, all at Grade 11 in organisation's hierarchy. Motivation due to competition for limited positions.
- Managers in low category (20%) - issues with life work balance, negative cost benefits analysis of rewards.
- Majority in medium category (60%) – issues with lack of direction from organisation (generally youngest managers in sample with dependant children and highly qualified).

d) Cognitive

- Majority (53%) in high category in terms of compulsory learning experiences – High achievers with positive experiences of formal education.
- Barriers detected (medium and low category) – university seen as 'means to an end', variable experiences of examinations.
- Only one (7%) in low category – older female with no children who did not attend university due to negative school experience, yet attained Grade 12 in organisation.
- Work related vocational barriers – majority (80%) experienced barriers (low and medium categories) relating to poorly focussed, non job specific courses, which were not sufficiently tailored for their needs (especially leadership or team development courses).

A2.4.2 Extrinsic Factors: General Themes and Conclusions

Table A2.2 illustrates the aggregate findings relating to the extrinsic factors influencing participation in learning. This table enables some interesting conclusions to be drawn regarding extrinsic factors and their influence on learning for the managers interviewed in CL. Each barrier is now discussed in turn in order to extract the main points of interest from the interviews:

Table A2. 2 - Extrinsic Factors and Learning for Managers in Central Life

Mgr	Org Culture	MD Culture	Physical Resources	Ratings (Total)
CL 1	[2]	- [1]	\ [2]	5
CL 2	[1]	- [1]	- [1]	3
CL 3	+ [3]	\ [2]	+ [3]	8
CL 4	\ [2]	+ [3]	+ [3]	8
CL 5	+ [3]	\ [2]	\ [2]	7
CL 6	\ [2]	\ [2]	\ [2]	6
CL 7	- [1]	- [1]	\ [2]	4
CL 8	\ [2]	- [1]	\ [2]	5
CL 9	- [1]	- [1]	- [1]	3
CL 10	\ [2]	- [1]	+ [3]	6
CL 11	\ [2]	- [2]	+ [3]	7
CL 12	- [1]	\ [2]	[1]	4
CL 13	- [1]	- [1]	+ [3]	5
CL 14	- [1]	\ [2]	\ [2]	5
CL 15	- [1]	\ [2]	- [1]	4
	+ = 2[13%] \ = 6[40%] = 7[47%]	+ = 1[7%] \ = 7[46.5%] = 7[46.5%]	+ = 5[33%] \ = 6[40%] = 4[27%]	

a) Organisational Culture

- All fifteen managers in the sample mentioned deliberate attempts to transform the culture in order to respond to the more turbulent external environment.
- The majority (87%) either displayed their outright negativity towards the culture change or at least some concern about certain elements of it.
- Negative managers – two conflicting views explaining negativity: Firstly company over zealous efforts to change the culture resulting in strict cost controlling, increasing pressure on employees. Secondly, certain elements of the traditional culture still in evidence, undermining central messages of culture change in CL.
- Neutral managers – mostly younger who though culture change was necessary to compete in competitive climate, but fear of losing positive elements of the traditional culture (staff loyalty, elements of paternalism).
- Positive managers (13%) – culture now more professional whilst retaining positive aspects of culture.

b) MD Culture

- Only one manager (7%) of sample positive about MD Culture as an older manager with many years service had noticed a lot more learning activity especially at team manager and team member level.
- Rest of sample (14 managers or 93%) were either neutral or negative about MD Culture.
- Neutral managers – accepted need to be more proactive with self development but felt opportunities, structures and support could be improved to enhance the learning climate (both young and older managers).
- Negative managers – perceived there to be ‘sheep dip’ type approach to provision as well as ‘lip-service’ paid to development issues by more senior managers who were disinterested in mentoring or coaching younger managers (mostly younger managers with longer service).

c) Physical resources issues

- A more even distribution found between managers with negative (27%) or positive attitudes (33%), but majority (40%) had neutral attitudes towards physical resource issues and effect on learning.
- The neutral managers, who were mostly younger professionals with young families – said they craved more attention to be paid to work/life balance issues.
- Negative managers – felt that time constraint were the number one issue preventing both them and their colleagues participating in learning activities.
- Positive managers – were much more pragmatic about the need to continue to develop and viewed learning as part of their everyday duties so time was not an issue because if learning required, it must be done.

A2.4.3 Final Remarks

The two managers with the highest ratings in relation to intrinsic aspects, (CL 3 and 13) were rated as having high prospects of participating in learning and development activities in relation to all the issues investigated. An analysis of their interviews essentially highlighted no significant barriers to learning.

Interestingly both these managers were involved with the Financial Planning Certificate (FPC). One had recently completed the qualification and the other was about to embark upon it. This fact actually illustrated how serious they both were in relation to participation. It was also interesting to note that, in terms of personal circumstances and

characteristics, these managers were very different. CL 3, was male, qualified actuary and pensions manager who had attended university. He was married with two children, was relatively old for this sample (48 years old) and had a series of rather time consuming spare time activities. The other manager (CL 13) was a 39 year old female who was married with two young children. She was Head of the New Business Department, had joined the company after completing higher examinations and had worked her way up to management level.

For those managers who were felt to be impeded by barriers to learning, one (CL 2) in particular emerged due to his low ratings in terms of participating in learning activities, having been classed as 'low' in four of the five issues covered. From his comments, it was obvious that he had little motivation to participate in learning activities that would upset his current lifestyle. As well as this, he showed signs of being unhappy with the current cultural changes that were happening in the organisation and also had experience of some rather poor work related learning activities (especially connected to organisational support).

In terms of personal characteristics and circumstances, this manager was relatively young - 40 years old. He was also very successful - a qualified actuary with an impressive educational record. However, from his comments, it became obvious that in recent years he had become somewhat disillusioned with the roles which had been allocated to him in the organisation. In essence, this manager appeared to show symptoms of a 'mid life crisis'. For the rest of the managers in CL, it became obvious that their comments often appeared to defy logical categorisation. However if one pattern did emerge, it was related to the influence that the organisational or external environment had on training and development participation.

In terms of extrinsic factors and how they may affect learning in the organisation only one manager (CL 2) appeared to display a negative in relation to all three extrinsic factors. This manager was negative about both the general culture of the organisation and the more specific issues relating to management development. He felt that time pressures were having a detrimental effect on both his and his colleagues ability to participate in learning activities. It is interesting to note that this same manager was rated as having a low propensity to learn across four of the five intrinsic learning issues. This is discussed further in the summary and conclusion to this appendix. Three other managers (CL 7, 9, 15) were also placed in the low category in relation to two of the three extrinsic factors. For example, CL 15 communicated her concerns about the effects of both an 'insular' culture

and the severe time constraints, proposing that these issues could cause potential disruption to learning.

None of the managers were placed in the positive category in relation to all three of the extrinsic factors, although two managers did rate highly in two of the three. The comments made by CL 3, for example, illustrated his positive opinion of the general culture in CL and also suggested that time should not be used as an excuse if one wished to participate in learning activities. However, he did appear to have reservations surrounding the level of provision of certain courses for his staff and, hence, was placed in the medium category with respect to this factor. CL 4 was also placed in the high propensity to participate category for two of the issues – MD culture and physical resources – but she did voice concerns about the effect that the culture change may have on the family atmosphere in the organisation.

The other managers in CL generally appeared to occupy the middle ground in relation to these extrinsic issues and their potential impact on learning and development. The general feeling seemed to be that the changes in culture, the opportunities and support available and the physical pressures present made participation in activities complex. However, they did appear to be relatively pragmatic about the potentially negative effects of the extrinsic environment and acknowledged these issues required to be dealt with.

Table A2.3 Central Life Manager Profiles

	CL 1	CL 2	CL 3	CL 4	CL 5	CL 6	CL 7
Age	35	40	48	47	35	46	50
Sex	M	M	M	F	M	M	M
Marital status	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
Spouse	Self employed	Not employed	Radiographer	Draughtsman	Teacher	Housewife	Teacher
Quals.	Actuary	Actuary	Actuary	Highers and professional	Actuary	FPC	BSc Degree
Children	Yes	No (No intention)	Yes - 2	No	Yes - 2	2 - first marriage, 3 now	3
School Stage of children	Primary School	No	Primary and sec.	No	Both primary	Various	PhD Research chemist; Accountant; Final year dentist (cost arm and leg)
Parents occupation	Missing	Self employed (retired)	F - Self employed (butcher), M - Post office	F - Engineer; M - Housewife	M - teacher; F - Social worker	Missing	F - Gen Mgr M - Office Mgr
Org title	Group Pensions and SASS manager	Pensions Manager	Pensions manager	Life Customer Services Manager	Company Pensions manager	Pensions Consultant	Life Service Manager
Career history	Missing	CL since Uni.	CL since 1972	CL for 30 years	1985 88 Actuarial student - FS insurance	5 years with SW, 15 years with A Dunbar and remainder CL	All working life with CL (apart from one break)
Distance from office	Missing	10 mins drive	10 miles	10 miles	33 miles or 40 mins away	12 miles away or half an hour by car	31 miles or 30 mins by car
Hobbies and Pastimes	Missing	Music, drama, dogs (3 evening a week)	Golf, squash, tennis, cycling	Swimming and walking	Rugby, Listening to Music	Football, swimming, walking - nothing too energetic	Folk singer, rambling, Director bowling club, Save the Children

	CL 8	CL 9	CL 10	CL 11	CL 12	CL 13	CL 14	CL 15
Age	35	36	36	35	35	39	36	47
Sex	M	F	M	M	F	F	F	F
Marital status	Co habitant	M	M	M	S	M	M	M
Spouse	Nurse	Electronic Engineer	CL – production support	Housewife	NA	Printer	Self Employed Artist and Illustrator	Solicitor
Quals.	Chartered Accountant	Chartered Accountant	BSc Computational science	BSc Computational science	MSc – Immunology	Higheers	BA and PG Dip HRM (IPD)	LLB Lawyer
Children	No	No	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes – 2	Yes – 1	Yes – 2
School Stage of children	No	No	Pre school	Pre school	NA	Primary	Pre school	20 – FT Student Secondary final
Parents occupation	Both Local government officers	F MD of finance coy and charity; M-Doctors receptionist	Retired	F-Mechanic (Garage owner); M-various	F - Retired Architect; M Housewife	F Engineer; M-Supervisor in glass house factory	F-Civil servant; M- PT typist	F Tax Accountant; M Housewife
Org title	Group Audit Manager	Financial Reporting Manager	IS Technical manager	IS Development Manager	Internal Communications Manager	Head of New Business	HR Manager for Training and Development	Legal and Compliance Manager
Career history	Ernst and Young – Audit Manager – only been in CL for 3 months	France – small coy; freelance in Holland; CL 1989-92, Ernst & Young US and London	CL since 1980	CL – all career (interesting note about perceived variety of experience received)	Regional Marketing Manager – Ernst and Young; accounts planner with Ad Agency	CL all life apart from 15month break in service	Civil Service; Laura Ashley 1987 95	Partner in Solicitors firm
Distance from office	10 mins or 3 miles	40 mins drive outside rush hour	5 miles away – drive	6 miles away or less than 10 mins drive	30 mins drive	8 miles or 20 mins drive	15 mins drive	35 Miles away 'Too far'
Hobbies and pastimes	Football, Golf, eating and drinking – 'normal guy'	Reading – (cynical about that – never time – always working)	Watching and playing football, hill-walking	Family, reading, golf, football (work mates and outside)	Amateur dramatics; Skiing and Horse riding	Working and family entertainment	Walking and Swimming	Swimming; reading; music and French lang. classes

Tables A2.4-A2.11 Central Life Tables Illustrating Evidence from Informants
Table A2.4 Perceptual issues and Prospects for Participation in Learning amongst CL Informants

	Low	Medium	High
CL1	Informal development emphasis never thought seriously about MBA		
CL2	What else is there to do – evidence of 'know enough already' attitude – not thought seriously of work related formal development		
CL3			Proactive in learning evidence in taking FPC qualification to support staff – qualified actuary and tutor to actuarial students
CL4	Had a long career with organisation with similar 'know enough already' attitude to CL2 Formalised development not felt to be appropriate for her		
CL5		Would like to do an MBA but personal life issues influence participation decision	
CL6		Interested in developing IT skills for example but work factors always come first and are number one issue	
CL7		Much MD available appears to be 'common sense' and when faced with work issues other more appropriate ways to develop skills	
CL8	Apathetic towards much company orientated development engaged in by some to get on 'bandwagon'		
CL9		Sees natural progression as MBA, but would need 2 years off to engage full time. Not going to happen in near future	
CL10	Admits to being uninterested in formal MD because it is poor for his needs – not thought about MBA for example would rather pursue other interests		
CL11		Felt after 1 st degree – enough formalised study. Considers informal MD better at this point in career where life issues are important	
CL12		Although feels she is 'learning orientated' – has problems seeing personal rewards for participating in development – can lead to 'why bother' attitude	
CL13			Proactive and enthusiastic about learning about arts art FPC qualification and communicated desire to be involved in 'any MD going' to be ready for external challenges
CL14		Sees need for continuing development but at critical stage in life where personal and family issues take precedence	
CL15			Admits to being 'hooked' on evening classes and therefore enjoys learning would like to participate in personal focussed and career orientated learning

Table A2.5 Emotional factors and prospects for participation in learning amongst CL Informants

	Low	Medium	High
CL1		Some anxiety and trepidation about the future for CL as result of take over and more focus on expenses	
CL2	Fear of exposure to colleagues in certain learning activities and real anxiety regarding future direction of CL and his place in it		
CL3			Positive about what the take over will mean more opportunities in future
CL4		Some anxiety regarding what the future is going to be like in the organisation with the erosion of paternalism	
CL5			Changes perceived as being inevitable must be prepared to make best of the situation here and take resultant opportunities
CL6		Some anxiety in that now accepts that part of a very modern company which will be more demanding of managers	
CL7		Acknowledges the fears and anxieties that middle managers might have as result of changes. Personally slightly anxious about the future but hopes to take on a mentoring role in org.	
CL8		Changes in the company from 'cosy to aggressive' where you have to deliver now (similar to previous company worked for). Such realisation may inhibit participation in certain activities.	
CL9	Demonstrates fear of becoming exposed in certain learning activities (MBA) where maybe setting oneself up for a fall in a company where there is more emphasis on results.		
CL10		Some anxiety regarding the future, as an employee of CLIM during take over experienced colleagues' redundancy. Now understands the results driven new atmosphere in CL.	
CL11			Few fears about his future feels that a 'safety net' still exists in life assurance firms Confident about employment prospect
CL12		Feels that 'job for life' scenario in a firm like CL is disappearing fast although feels that older managers whose 'tool-bag is limited' may have more to worry about, she also recognises the need to deliver	
CL13			Positive regarding the future of the firm under new board hopes things will continue to change rapidly, feels that personal learning is important for her to be part of it
CL14	Similar to comments raised before where there is some fear of exposure and moving outside comfort zone. Admits to being on a plateau because of desire to spend time and energy on young family		
CL15		Disillusioned with career direction. Would participate in learning if knew what company wanted her to do and there was more structure.	

Table A2.6 Motivational factors and prospects for participation in learning amongst CL Informants

	Low	Medium	High
CL1		Illustration of motivation was attempts to undertake language course on several occasions but has been constrained by pressures arising from both work and family	
CL2	Feels as if it is a 'constant slog' because of the physical pressures in the organisation at the present time. Feels so physically drained at end of day the thought of anything to add to that would be prohibitive		
CL3			Clearly motivated and ambitious in career and similarly towards development opportunities, for example FPC course taken to illustrate his willingness to participate 'putting flag up'
CL4	Accepts that she has low motivation, but feels that it is hard to get motivated and know what else you need to do in relation to learning in the organisation		
CL5		Would like to do an MBA but not motivated to fully investigate because feels that pursuing the qualification would not be compatible with work and family at present.	
CL6		Accepts need and would like to participate but in end feels constrained by deadlines which are ultimately what you are judged upon.	
CL7			Motivated manager who believes he has valid role to play in coaching and mentoring of younger managers
CL8		Again likely to be motivated to pursue learning that he feels he really needs but appears to have a problem because concrete rewards seem fuzzy at this level in the organisation.	
CL9		Similar issues as CL 5 where doing an MBA maybe a logical step but work compatibility issues hamper motivation to investigate options.	
CL10	Not ambitious and hence has low motivation in relation to pursuing formal development activities which might be avenue to move further up the hierarchy, which would disrupt current lifestyle. Motivated to 'do a good job'.		
CL11		Need to really be self motivated and push yourself to think about doing things here that are not core to your role. If development comes along ok, but not pushing to find more.	
CL12		Similar issues as CL 11, where it is hard to 'do that little bit extra' and because often rewards are not made clear enough.	
CL13			Clearly highly motivated and ambitious as is illustrated in decision to take a FPC qualification
CL14		Some motivation but current family situation is a constraining factor, but considering doing a MSc in Occupational Psychology.	
CL15		Motivated but constrained as a result of lack of communication about what is required or what may accrue as a result.	

Table A2.7 Cognitive issues and prospects for participation in learning amongst CL Informants (General)

	Low	Medium	High
CL1			Generally positive experience of compulsory and university education found style and method of learning to suit him.
CL2			Very positive experience of formal education at all levels from school and university right through to professional actual qualifications
CL3			Qualified actuary positive experience throughout school and university career
CL4	Negative experience of formal examination experience which dissuaded her from following university route		
CL5			As qualified actuary again had good experience of education at all levels although felt that university experience was too theoretical and therefore may be inclined towards more practical learning now
CL6		No real mention of formal education in interview – generally appears to be quite positive surrounding it	
CL7		Similar as CL 2 – very positive early experience at school although changed direction from medicine to mathematics and then decided to not complete actual qualifications as a result of family pressures. Led to an emphasis on more informal learning now	
CL8			Fairly positive experience of university – similar to CL 1 who found certain aspects of university better than others – e.g. Completing dissertation with tutor resembled a mentoring relationship at work.
CL9			Again successful in formal learning experience although different from most managers here in that enjoyed the more passive style of learning based on lectures rather than more proactive forms of learning
CL10		Degree educated and no real issues raised about preferences in compulsory or higher level education	
CL11		Enjoyed university experience but was glad to finish course and had no real desire to carry on with this formal type learning – wanted to get out and work and if learning connected to that then ok.	
CL12		Not keen on formal examinations but realised that they were a means to an end, which had to be dealt with – although would not be keen to go through such formalised trauma again.	
CL13			Not a graduate but does appear to be extremely positive about taking part in formal education in FPC.
CL14		Only real problem was the unstructured elements at university which were so different from school and therefore harder to adjust to – experience now used at work to make sure that students have clear learning objectives.	
CL15			Positive experience of formal education and any classroom based learning participated in – spurred on to take more night classes etc.

Table A2.8 Cognitive issues and prospects for participation in learning amongst CL Informants (Vocational Activities)

	Low	Medium	High
CL1		Correspondence course - learning method that had done to achieve actual qualification not favoured learning method problematic with life balance.	
CL2	Felt vulnerable in work initiated MD course see emotional issues and learning comments similar		
CL3			Memories of how actual course delivery tutors (CL actuares not qualified to teach. Has tutored himself since experience affected him and spurred him into action
CL4		Poor experience of exams led to emphasis on informal development techniques, e.g. secondments at times 'frightening', but benefits, would encourage team to do it	
CL5		Actual qualification - expected to work and study - difficult learning experience work life balance issues. Hence reluctance to investigate doing an MBA at this time.	
CL6		Quite positive manager (see motivational and perceptual issues on participation in learning. Reservations about commitment of top management 'lip service')	
CL7		Did not complete actual qualification - life issues - has no regrets on anything else connected to learning. Would appear to be reluctant to embark on courses now - common sense - wants to devote energy to mentoring young managers.	
CL8		Block release courses not valuable for learning - focus on exams and trying to get past each stage. Preference for practically orientated learning activities, where trainers can relate issues to real life - hard to find such events	
CL9	Poor experience of company 'sheep dip' training, does nothing for individual skills where people sit 'theorising' - not practically orientated would not want to do again. Same concerns as CL 5 work study		
CL10	Similar to CL 9, emphasis on 'sheep dip' MD led to scepticism on worth of Outward Bound courses and would appear to be reluctant to participate again.		
CL11		No really negative experiences at any learning event attended - problem related to actually putting it into practice when return - where the real learning happens.	
CL12		Quite enjoyed Outward Bound MD courses, but like others did not take too seriously - little management skills learned there. If push came to shove - would not be too keen if other more important things were happening.	
CL13			Positive about experiences - shown before keen to participate in available MD but problem for MD when best not got out of it because certain colleagues do not buy in
CL14		Poor experiences of vocational training (IPD)- too theoretical to actually help student in real job. Influenced her managing of student in this organisation.	
CL15			Generally positive experiences of learning in terms of CPD shown in other sections; is concerned with career direction

Table A2.9 Organisational cultural issues (Culture of organisation and industry): Impact on learning in CL

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
CL1		Recognises the changing culture – maybe mourns a bit of the effects of that - staff management relations may have suffered a bit, but also pragmatic in realising that the need for that change. Still elements left of hierarchy and insularity in the staff even though the fact those newer and younger managers have come in.	
CL2	Mourning the passing of the family atmosphere that was apparent in the company when he first joined 18 year ago. Feels that people are working terribly hard now and therefore would not expect them to participate in development in their spare time		
CL3			Changing culture is acknowledged however very pragmatic about this and feels change was inevitable. Not negative about the change in the same way as other managers. Still feels it is paternalistic to a large extent but the 'holiday camp' feeling has gone – which was needed
CL4		Culture deliberately changed from the top, but care needed to avoid losing certain elements in the culture change like experienced staff. Still elements of paternalism but balance needs to be struck. Sees change at industry level too – pragmatic about this, realises assurance industry has had it good for a long time and t change required. Impression given that she is ready for that challenge of changes.	
CL5			Still feels CL is paternalistic even with the changes that have taken place and a good organisation to work for. Describes culture as enlightened but not as 'fired up' as other organisational cultures. Generally feels the organisation is good one to work for.
CL6		Notes the erosion of paternalism , feels there is the balance between more aggressive and commercial and keeping some elements in place of what was good about the culture – (similar to CL 4), whilst still demanding more from employees too. See the changes in context of FS sector; pragmatic – realises that CL has to move forward.	
CL7	Changing culture appreciated but has concerns about the effect of the more commercial environment on middle managers that appear to experience the brunt and are likely to be a bit ' fearful ' and insecure . As a result may be less likely to take risks or experiment because they are too busy a barrier to learning in the culture		
CL8		Culture changed - main effects - certain longer serving managers will have been moved out because they are not so used to the culture of delivering. Paternalistic roots of the company will still keep them there but they are 'basically finished' in terms of career. General acceptance that culture change is needed in general scheme of wider industry change and desire for more specialist managers and professionals – but not really a concern for him personally.	

CL9	Younger manager with experience in other companies – to her CL culture is realistic now but to others she could well see it being described as ruthless CL moving in right way but have long way to go to remove inconsistencies and contradictions in the culture. In industry see general lack of resources in terms of accountants and professionals therefore working very hard at the moment in the company.		
CL10		Notes quite traumatic personal time for him and other long company servant. Generally pragmatic about changes in company which is now more realistic and better able to cope with the challenges ahead in the external culture of the industry. Realises that the company is vulnerable and that his job is not secure but really not too concerned with that at the moment	
CL11		Notes culture-change (at least attempts to change it) but still is a lot of paternalism around the place - when change attempted management often get it wrong. Feels IT is different because of turbulent conditions in the external environment. Similar to CL 10, quite pragmatic - just getting on with job in turbulent environment and not too worried about security issues.	
CL12	Positive about culture changing moving in the right direction by getting rid of blame culture , as well as people beginning to move on in careers, and less 'job for life' around. However CL still has too much control from the top and is risk averse and paternalistic . As an outsider (Advertising) in this industry – long overdue the changes that are now taking place.		
CL13	Culture still dated and can cause no end of frustration because of bureaucracy and red tape involved in getting things done. Acknowledges the fact that culture change has been attempted but wishes more dramatic change had resulted from take over. Pragmatic in that she sees problems in the external environment realises that the company must tackle the problems.		
CL14	Still feels a blame culture exists even if they try to deny it but trying to move away from the very grade conscious culture doesn't know how far they have come with it all		
CL15	Culture felt to be unsular as staff appear to not experience anything else much. Problems in terms of the departments not understanding and not being interested in what each other are doing, and also a lack of communication between different managers. Realises that there is a change in the industry and that the company is responding but questions the damage of the presentecism culture which exists now.		

Table A2.10 MD Culture issues (Opportunities learning climate in organisation): Impact on learning in CL

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
CL1	Problems associated to 'sheep-dip' in that MD courses not well supported 'people switching off' from various departments. Also perceived lack of mentoring in organisation – lay on top of other reponsibilities Budgetary restraints limitation too		
CL2	'Sheep-dip' program may have turned people off but if try to be proactive one self then likely to get 'absolutely no support' from colleagues for participation - right up to senior managers 'lip-service'. Fewer managers training due to 'too much work to do', more career guidance needed		
CL3		Does not think 'lip service' is paid by managers to T&D, but acknowledges problems related to structure and availability – Learning Resource Centre not enough. Career path becomes hazier as you progress up the organisation. Staff now more interested in developing.	
CL4			Generally positive about opportunities in organisation stresses need for self development from staff and managers something she is involved in helping. Useful point made HR department there appears to be no shortage of opportunities backed up by learning centre support. Different from CL3 is perception of plenty of available courses. One slightly negative issue - not enough spent on training, need a more focussed idea of what to spend.
CL5		Impression that there is some lip service and not delivering as much as say we do. Generally feels that opportunities are ok for managers, but refers to the fact about people being busy lately and with the disruption (take-over) it may have caused opportunities to decrease slightly but now back on track.	
CL6		Emphasises the importance of self development and identifying things yourself that you really need in your job – guidance in annual review but up to you in the end. But commitment is important element in deciding on what opportunities there are in the organisation – if Senior Mgt committed and take T&D seriously - will spin off down the line. But sometimes get feeling top are not interested, - whole thing loses it's way and everyone pays 'lip service'.	
CL7	Generally quite negative (limited opportunities) about provision of T&D - little follow through in the process as top mgt lend 'lip-service' for 'sheep dip' programs. Need more provision of mentoring scheme to allow potentially good managers to be spotted early In terms of learning culture need emphasis put on secondments as a way of developing managers.		
CL8	Quite negative limited opportunities both within and out-with the organisation Feels that in comparison to his previous company limited T&D structures in place, needs to be more guidance in place. Too generous to say T&D has 'lip service' - appears to not be very high on the agenda. At this level need to think about self-development and be proactive yourself or else you are not going to do much		

CL9	Negative regarding opportunities in the organisation although negative about participating anyway. Feels there is a lack of worthwhile appraisal or opportunities to discuss T&D there. Generally would appear to believe that there are few opportunities for her related to working long hours in the past where opportunities not asked for or taken up in climate of insecurity last 4-5 years. Ultimately Lip service characterises management's attitude to T&D.		
CL10	Two main issues surrounding learning and MD culture need to get more focused and tailored courses for individuals needs instead of rounds of 'sheep-dips'. Secondly would like to see more opportunity for managers to get out and see other things in terms of secondments etc. Really stresses the need for self-development because you are not pushed through anything in organisation.		
CL11		For MD – it really is up to you to decide on what you want to do, and self-development is therefore important. Could benefit from getting some help in the identification of skills to enhance further development.	
CL12		Slightly negative about the limited opportunities although training and development is being taken more seriously now in the firm for managers on offer to both her and more generally in the organisation. Appears to be an amount of lip service and no real clear structures to talk of. Feels that secondments etc. to get people out of departments would be useful. Also need to get more coaching and assistance in place and put together a system more akin to what actuaries get.	
CL13	Fairly neutral about the opportunities available in the organisation. Echoes sentiments about lack of career path structure and guidance on what to participate in. MD culture appears to be not serious – not willing to invest fully or buy in fully – in house courses offered rather than paying professionals to come in. Most courses delivered through the sheep-dip approach. real need for tailoring to individuals and managers who are not encouraged to think about going on more coaching and development . Evidence of inertia in complacent development too easy to do nothing. Hence has not noticed much activity in terms of people going on more courses.		
CL14		Recognised constraints in the organisation – clear career and succession policies is most important one. Generally thinks there are opportunities both in the organisation, but admits that there is still a very sheep-dippy approach to development of managers where idea was to try to imitate more personal activity. Also feels if a mentoring system were put in place - would help the organisation and particularly a set of managers who still have a lot to offer.	
CL15		Feels there is a need for support and guidance in identifying opportunities for managers – particularly at senior level. Self development is most important issue now and people are beginning to face up to the fact that they are not going to have a job for life anymore - have to keep their skills updated if they are to progress further.	

Table A2.11 Physical Resource Issues (Time, place, costs): Impact on learning in CL

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
CL1		Relatively negative a lot of work being done now both in the organisation and in industry. Quite pragmatic about what needed to be done and understands the need to balance work with need for development. Time constraints - first response examples of not finishing language courses Finds that a lot of courses are based in Northern England	
CL2	Very negative manager in terms of physical barriers to learning. Notes a lot of examples that show how difficult it all is to get the time to develop. Feels that there is not the support for learning and development in the organisation, allied to the fact that everyone appears to working a lot harder . Training often is causing people are physically tired just doing actual jobs		
CL3			Manager acknowledges the pressure and time constraints to say that this is a reason to not developing is an excuse . If it is really that important then it is up to you to make sure that it is higher on your list of priorities. Quite positive and again pragmatic about the need to develop in spite of the pressures from both within and out with the organisation. Notes the lack of provision of courses he and his staff might want to go on in Central Scotland
CL4			Time constraints mentioned with the pressure of work, but interesting point is that when a course or other type of learning is perceived as being essential you just have to make the time to go on it. Question of elevating it to correct order of importance and going for it. So although quite pessimistic about the problem of time, pragmatic enough to know that sometimes time should not be used as an excuse
CL5		Time pressures nominated as the only real barriers to further development activity - need to work more and be with family. Quite negative about time pressure problem - appears to have prevented some participation but hoping that now in 'calmer waters'.	
CL6		Although negative about the time pressures and realises that they exist is also quite pragmatic - feels development and skills training is also important (but comes off second best sometimes) and is the responsibility of the managers involved. Notes that around 95% of relevant conferences and courses are in London - frustrating.	
CL7		Quite negative about the changes but commercial and time pressures that is apparent in all industries now. However these would appear to have been exacerbated by the takeover - a lot more aware of profit margins. Hard to know whether the pressures have actually hampered his participation in the past or not. London bias again noted and costs are prohibitive.	
CL8		Tends to become embroiled in 'fire-fighting' - tendency to neglect ones own development to concentrate on what is going on in the here and now - short termism. But again readily admits that more discipline on his part is needed. Quite pragmatic therefore in understanding the need for him to control time and agenda better. A lot of opportunities in London - but if quality there need to go.	

CL9	Very negative about the impact on organisation from outside and the effects on her ability to participate in development opportunities Resources issue in end and this ultimately necessitates a short termism training tendency to fall away, even with the best will in the world from motivated training and development staff. Simply comes down to the fact that there is not enough time to participate in training		
CL10			Appreciates physical pressures on the company at the moment and ultimately - lack of time, but pragmatic to know that often people appear to use the time issue and adhere to the 'too busy to do anything' culture. In effect individuals need to get on with it - be that development or whatever to improve their performance In that sense quite similar to CL 3 views on the pressure side
CL11			Quite pragmatic admits that there are pressures, but really any barrier to participation is at his door because of his inability to manage his time properly and ultimately because training and development and actual time away will get squeezed.
CL12	Quite negative deadlines and expectations appear to get in the way of your personal development, frustrating for her. However feels that sometimes in organisation and industry 'training gets in the way' of targets which is the most important thing. Typical conferences and courses are in London.		
CL13			Pragmatic regarding the effect of time constraints Different from other managers accepts that it is something that she has to cope with in the organisation and if she really wants to develop will have to get on with it.
CL14		Orientated towards the home life balance issue. More interested in that than the other pressures in the external environment which are driving the company at the moment Feels that to combine both studying, work and home life would mean compromising on all fronts. Pragmatic about what she wants in life.	
CL15	Negative about the amount of work that people are putting in the organisation Has clear views about development and feels need to be developed but recognises resource issues that are there Feels there is a presentism problem in the company. Nay have to travel to London for courses		

APPENDIX THREE

Lothian Life Assurance Company

Lothian Life (LL) specialises in the provision of life assurance, pensions and investment contracts. At the point of data collection, there were approximately 1250 members of staff who were either located at the company's Head Office in Edinburgh or at one of the 18 branch offices throughout the country. Lothian Life was established towards the end of the 19th century, with the most important milestone in the company's recent history being its conversion to a mutual company in the late 1960s.

Since then LL has grown to become an important player in the Scottish Financial community, offering a variety of products including pensions, mortgages and investments and, in December 1997, was reported to have funds under management exceeding £6.8 billion and reserves of over £675 million. This growth has been based on the central commitment to the Independent Financial Advisor marketplace rather than by dealing directly with the general public. As an illustration of this commitment the company have consistently received Five Star Service Awards in the annual survey of IFAs as conducted by Financial Advisor and the IFA Association.

The achievement of the Investors in People standard for the first time in 1997 is an important event to have occurred, in recognition of the broad range of training offered to staff at all levels. In 1997 LL attained the status as an approved centre for granting Scottish Vocational Qualifications. To counter this, however, there appears to be an ethos of vulnerability surrounding this particular company as a result of increasing media speculation about the future independent position of smaller mutual life assurance companies in Scotland.

A3.1 Organisational Context

In an interview with the Training and Development Manager (T&D Manager), questions on a number of issues were posed to gain an insight into the organisational context. The main issues which arose in that interview are shown below, but for more detailed information on the organisational context please see Appendix Seven.

- One of the smaller Scottish mutual companies which operates firmly on the principal of carrying out business with Independent Financial Advisors only.
- As a result of smaller size, felt to be relatively vulnerable to take-over in UK and European life assurance markets.

- There have been recent improvements in company decision making and communications process, which were acknowledged to be not particularly well developed.
- Culture was described as being 'traditional, conservative with small 'c' and paternalistic', but there was acceptance that many of the principals of LL's culture would continue to be eroded under the directorship of a New Chief Executive.
- T&D Manager acknowledged that in terms of training and development there was still some way to go before a truly learning culture was established and all aspects of development, (not just gaining professional qualifications) were equally valued so that managers skills were matched with career aspirations.
- In terms of rewards for taking part in developmental opportunities, although gaining certain professional qualifications such as actuarial, accountancy or law ensured that a certain level of status in the company was guaranteed, the practice of giving cash bonuses was being deliberately eroded.
- The responsibility for providing sufficient MD opportunities lay with T&D department, but ultimately it was up to the individual managers with the support of their line managers to ensure that they participated in development.
- Gaining IiP accreditation helped to formalise some of the procedures already in place in the company like annual appraisals for example, which were the most important tool in determining what development managers' received.
- Competency frameworks being used for performance management, but not fully taken up as yet.

A3.2 Intrinsic issues and learning

In the following sections those barriers to learning that could be manifest as a result of the managers' intrinsic attitudes, behaviour and experiences are discussed.

A3.2.1 Perceived need for participation - Perceptual

a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

Table A3.4 highlights the general findings relating to perceptual issues and participation in learning activities for the thirteen mid career managers. Five managers were adjudged to have low propensity to participate in further learning or development activities because they did not perceive there to be a real need for them to do so.

In effect, the comments from two of the managers (LL 7 & 11) indicated that they had reached a stage in their careers where they were content and hence did not think that further development was worthwhile for them. One manager (LL 7) for example, felt that doing an MBA or similar formal learning at her career stage would be 'worthless'. The sentiments from two others (LL 6,12) clearly illustrated the perception that taking on more developmental activities (outside of work) would cause considerable upheaval in their lives:

Since I qualified however again, ... lets say that I'm comfortable with what I've got at the moment Perhaps I'm looking to live slightly out with my comfort zones if I want to get any further and the bereavement (of father) did hit me quite a lot and it did focus me on what I was trying to do. (LL6)

And:

I have to say that I find in the evenings I don't particularly want to study - I think that the mental energy gets used up during the day and in the evening I tend to do things of a more physical nature and I am quite a keen sportsman. (LL12)

Through his comments the other manager placed in this low category, LL 9 illustrated that he also had low perceived need to participate in further MD activities. He clearly felt that, unless the learning activities could provide concrete business benefits, then there was little point in taking time out from one's job to participate:

Interviewer: What is your view personally on management development and learning?

Personally I am not convinced by it to the same extent that when you are younger you do need to learn and develop - I think whenever you are into management there would need to be business advantage in doing it and if there isn't clearly business advantage then don't do it you are wasting your time and you are better off doing your job. ... So it is a vicious circle, if it is learning how to run your business better there is absolutely nothing wrong with that that's entirely helpful, it has to be entirely business related once you are management ... we are not sort of queuing up to go on training courses for the sake of them, but we have been to other skills based courses which are not in the least bit academic. To be honest I think from where I sit I am not clear that there is business advantage in attending these I am very sceptical about the worth of them particularly about these sorts of leadership courses. (LL9)

b) Managers in medium category (some prospects of participation)

The comments extracted from the interviews with another five managers from LL displayed some evidence that perceptual barriers to learning could be present and hence could hinder their participation in development activities. Essentially two major themes came to the fore for this 'medium' category: the impact of career stage and the effect of conflicting commitments in other areas of life. For three in particular (LL 4,5 & 10), although clearly there was some desire to continue to develop, there was also confusion about the development activities they were expected to participate in. The comments from LL 5 clearly sum up how such confusion may impact on their desire to participate:

An MBA crossed my mind but ... there's no evidence that the company treats that in a particular way. You might think for someone with an MBA and someone without one, that should be the first point, but there's no guidelines or feedback from management or personnel that it is something they recommend. I know that Highland Life, for example, promote MBAs, they're quite keen on that and therefore it's an incentive because the management recognises that and the individual does that in the knowledge. To do that here, where there is no guideline or regulation, while there's talk of a recommended way forward, there's no guarantee to what extent they recognise it. (LL5)

The second main theme to emerge amongst these managers was that their perceived need to participate was affected to some extent by other factors – their work or family life commitments:

I had the discipline to do the ACII before I was married and when I could shut myself away without interruption and cram to get the information into my head...with 3 young children, I'm not convinced how much time I would be able to devote. There never seems to be any time for anything in the house let alone in the office... I'm learning but I'm not learning as much as I could, I'm bogged down in administration and paperwork quite a lot of the time that is preventing me from developing in other areas (LL5)

c) Managers in high category (good prospects of participation)

The three remaining managers in LL were considered to have no real perceptual barriers to learning and, in fact, their comments indicated that they realised the need to continue participating in learning activities. These three managers were interested in pursuing appropriate development activities and had been actively involved in initiating recent interventions. For two of the managers, these development interventions appeared to be geared towards helping them to perform their managerial roles in a more effective way.

The following interview segments illustrate their views:

I am very keen that I get that training because there are certain skills and abilities and weaknesses that we all need to improve on to make us more efficient and better at our jobs really, so I suppose I am very positive about it. (LL 8)

Also:

Interviewer: So your manager has initiated most training and development?

In most cases yes. Last year, I initiated a lot of my own training through my manager, which tends to happen the further up the tree you get, then it becomes easier to put recommendations forward on your own training. We've completely revamped our own training programme in terms of requirements whereby the training was set on objectives set by our line manager. They said you need certain training for certain tasks but in some cases it was a case of this knowledge is required for me to perform my duty therefore I need to get this training organised. (LL 2)

The other manager, placed in this high propensity category, was at the time of the interview undertaking a MBA qualification. When asked why he perceived there to be a need to participate in this course, this manager indicated that he had rather more longer term objectives:

I felt that I didn't have a strong management training background. I had some training ...from one outward bound course and a couple of internal courses on appraisal interviews, ... I didn't feel that I had a wide enough management training background or that there was enough training. At the time I was thinking about moving on as well (LL 3)

A3.2.2 Fears or Insecurities surrounding Learning Participation - Emotional

In this section the aim was to identify whether emotional barriers to learning were present for this managerial group in LL. An additional objective was to examine the reasons

behind why mid career managers were 'fearful or insecure' and how that may affect their participation in learning. Table A3.5 highlights the findings in terms of emotional factor and how they may affect participation in learning activities.

a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

From Table A3.5 it can be seen that five managers (LL 3,5, 6, 10 & 11) were felt to indicate that as a result of their comments in relation to emotional fears of insecurities they would have a low propensity to participate in further learning.

The dominant and recurring theme to emerge amongst three managers was the uncertainty surrounding their future careers within the organisation. These doubts appeared to be exacerbated by a general lack of guidance from the company in terms of enhancing their career stability. For LL 3, for example, a certain amount of frustration and disappointment was detected in his comments as he felt that the company had not taken full advantage of the fact that he was studying for an MBA. This had served to dishearten and alienate him:

As I'm being sponsored by the company, I'm asking for input to the sorts of things they think I should do ... I've tried to lay out the courses and the ones I want to do, but trying to get feedback is very hard. It's a case of OK, on you go or what is this course, what does it mean and I'm finding it difficult in that respect. Dissertation wise [for MBA], well I have a lot of thoughts on that area but getting people to sit down and say, that's OK, well I'm just carrying on regardless.

Interviewer: It must be frustrating for you?

It is, yes. One of the dangers is my expectations, I had an expectation that doing an MBA would widen my experience and should widen my opportunities. If opportunities don't exist here, then I'm going to go, so I'm interested in why they sponsored me - is it just because they think if they don't I'll do it and leave, I don't know, but they haven't managed my expectations very well. All along I've stressed that I've gained from it and that Lothian Life can gain from it if they actually plan and think about what I'm going to do and how I can be used and I haven't seen any evidence of that. (LL 3)

As has been discussed in Section A3.2.1, manager LL 5 clearly had similar problems LL 3 in relation to actual support and guidance from the company. In his (LL 5's) case there was a reluctance to commit to participating in further development. As far as he was concerned, *'the management development in this company is poor in that there is no structured discussions on career development, on where you're going, on what you need to do to get there sooner, [or what you need to develop to become a more effective manager.'*

For the third manager in this 'low' category, similar sentiments regarding the support and guidance received from the company, particularly when he undertook the APMI qualification, were displayed. He felt there was *'no formal support as there was with the a tuaria exams, or with ACII and so it has been very much a self motivating process.'* In this manager's case,

the propensity to participate further in learning activities appeared to be further compounded by the death of his father.

Interviewer: How would you see your career developing?

Following my father's death .. in 1986, I asked myself that very same question and it did lead me to apply for voluntary redundancy last year. I mentioned that I was in a previous role, which was very low in decision making, and I could not see myself continuing in that for 10 years certainly, 5 years unlikely and 2 years at the very most. I have therefore been looking at positions elsewhere in Lothian Life and this has been made known to my managers, ... Even in my current role, I'm still not seeing a future in this company in the long term. There was a job opportunity that came up in another area of the office, which I thought with my qualifications and background, I was reasonably suited for, but I was not chosen for that job. That was something that I thought could have been something longer term but I think I'll just have to wait and see what happens. There is a change in the company coming soon, from the very top, and I think it depends on whether there are any structural changes, as to whether there's anything for me (LL 6)

The other two managers (LL 10 & 11) in this category were somewhat different in that they were so complacent that they would not particularly want to participate further in learning and development activities. The following quotation from one of these two complacent managers neatly sums up the typical views held when asked about how they felt their future career would progress:

It's very hard to say, I would say that I'm at a level where I may or may not go any further in the company, I think I'm past the stage where I can assume, given time and if I keep my nose clean, where I can progress higher. It'll partly depend on opportunities, if a vacancy arises and I'm seen to have done well, then I may go a little higher, but probably not too much further. I'm reasonably satisfied with the job I've got. (LL 10)

b) Managers in medium category (some prospects of participation)

Seven managers were rated as having a medium propensity to participate after drawing out aspects relating to their emotions. For all these managers, although there were a vast array of different opinions given in their comments, the general unifying theme was that they had some trepidation regarding their future either within Lothian Life or indeed the external labour market. For two of the managers in particular (LL 4 & 12) there were clearly some fears about what exactly their future career held for them and their anxiety of becoming boxed into a 'corner' became apparent:

The only alternative is to move completely out of IS and into something completely different, maybe marketing and I'd like to see that kind of thing happen more often but I think the reality is that it won't happen for myself. I think I am unfortunately in too much of a corner, more of a corner than I'd like to be but that's just the way things have developed for me (LL 4)

Appendix Three

LL 12 communicated similar sentiments about in the future:

I feel that I've got quite a pressured and a responsible job and I don't particularly crave more of that so from that point of view I am happy enough doing the job that I'm doing but equally the thought of doing it for the next 15 or 20 years. I think I might want something different and change that way. At this stage I am in a bit of limbo because [our departmental] boss retires this year as does our Chief General Manager and the structure of the organisation might change so I think just now there's a little bit of wait and see what happens really. There will be some impact, ... if it doesn't I will be saying, 'Oh God I will be here for the next 10 or 20 years'. I will have a different view of it but right now the job is demanding and challenging ... so I don't have a problem with it and I don't feel I need to be doing something else (LL 12)

For three other managers (LL 8, 9 & 13), although certain comments describing their future career prospects were tinged with trepidation, it appeared that these emotional barriers were not strong enough to halt participation completely. The following comments describe how two of these managers had already been receiving calls from recruitment consultants about potential opportunities:

I was promoted to management at the beginning of last year so I suppose the next few years will be a period of consolidation. The difficulty is that ... we are getting a new chief executive next month, we are always subject to speculation about de-mutualisation or getting taken over and it is hard to know where we will be in two or five years time. It is difficult to know if that will present opportunities or threats, we'll have to wait and see. It's interesting to note that because I have been promoted I have had more headhunters phoning me than before so there are still opportunities out with Lothian Life to take your career to a different level. (LL 8)

Also:

I've been in the technical role for about ten years - and I've gained a lot of experience so to that extent, I mean at the moment we're a bit strapped for resource and experience. I'm the most experienced guy on the floor apart from my superior, and he's right at the top of that particular limb of the tree, so I think it depends - it's a few years before he retires - ... it's impossible to say. One never knows what's round the corner but by the same token, the phone goes from time to time with headhunters and one of them might make me a great offer and I might be the risk taker. (LL 9)

The other two managers placed in this 'medium' group also exhibited various fears surrounding participating in learning and development activities. Manager LL 2, for instance, indicated that there was an element of risk involved in asking for more development activities due to the perceived views of management:

The training that I need now is harder to organise and quantify. A lot requires to be justified and it's hard to find because if you look at the requirements of the more senior people, they have less and less training. They may have an interest in something else and in a lot of cases, it's difficult to get that because a lot of people think that if you're given career progression opportunities, you'll move elsewhere. (LL 2)

LL 7 expressed that the organisation should address the issue that certain emotional traits might inhibit participation in learning:

I didn't particularly enjoy being videoed on a two-day course, and standing up in front of people because it's not really a thing I like doing, but I felt I needed to do it, so I forced myself to do it. Now there are other things that I would be less keen to do, but somebody should be there to nudge me towards things that I need to do to improve my performance and I think that's lacking .. I had to do presentations and they were agony and I knew I was bad at them, I mean really bad at them, so it's a question of which is the lesser of two evils, but there are some people who would just avoid it totally and I used to be more like that - I'm more pro learning now than I used to be (LL 7)

c) Managers in high category (good prospects of participation)

Only one manager was placed in this high propensity to learn category. This manager LL 1 was assured in his current position, and had little real worries or insecurities about either participating in learning activities or about future career prospects, but still perceived there to be a need to continue to participate:

I see myself developing further within the group pension area, which is where I'm currently assistant manager and I would like to be in charge of that area. Currently I'm reporting through the applications services manager and I feel I'm a key person there anyway, there's a lot of leeway there and I'm quite confident. So I see myself developing hopefully to be a manager assuming the senior management feel I'm capable. (LL 1)

A3.2.3 Motivation to participate in Learning Activities – Motivational

The aim in this subsection was to understand how motivated the managers were to take part in learning activities and hence to categorise them according to their motivation.

a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

As can be seen from Table A3.6 three managers were placed in the 'low' category. It was felt that these managers illustrated relatively little motivation or desire to participate in further learning activities. Essentially the message of complacency in terms of their current situation in the organisation became apparent. Two of the managers (LL 10 & 11) were clearly aware of the lack of motivation and suggested any development undertaken would be purely for consolidation. For example, when asked if he would regard himself as a self-starter in terms of undertaking learning, LL 10 commented that he was, *'probably a bit guilty of carrying on with what he had got, it probably [did] take someone else to come along and tell him to go on a course or find out about this and that.'* Interestingly both of these managers were placed in the 'low' propensity category when emotional issues were discussed. This fact helps to enrich the general understanding of the position of these two particular managers who appeared to be fairly content with their current position in the organisation.

Due to the political nature of the company, LL 6 felt there would be few real rewards (promotion) for him at this stage in his career and felt that participating further would not remedy this situation:

Interviewer: Are you aware of any career path or succession policy that operate here?

Yes there is a very clear path, if you're in the right place at the right time and that's the only policy that I can see. There are certain managers that have been made managers in the last few years – some I agree with and some I don't – but it seems to me that it's being at the right place at the right time, not based on quality of the individual (LL 6)

This sensitive subject of to how political factors may influence learning and development activity of mid career managers is discussed in greater detail later in Section A3.3.1, exploring the organisational culture.

b) Managers in medium category (some prospects of participation)

Eight managers were identified as having a 'medium' propensity to participate in learning and development. Essentially, these managers were inhibited from undertaking learning due to various restraining factors and thus, while they were not averse to participating, there was limited likelihood that they would. These factors restricting the motivation to participate can be split into three broad categories. While the first set of managers described the indicators in terms of the pressure of work and family commitments, the second category could be defined as those who were concerned by the ambiguities of the outcomes or rewards gained from such participation. The third group identified the ineffectiveness and inappropriateness of formal development as being a potential inhibitor to their participation, generally due to previous negative experiences in this area.

The following quote from LL 5 provides an example of the first category, illustrating how the pressures of work affect motivation to learn; *'So, arguably I should be saying, well I want to get trained on this to be some more effective in that but in actual fact, I'm trying to achieve deadlines and getting the department to achieve deadlines all the time.'* These views were supported by LL 9 and LL 13, who also intimated that work pressures acted as inhibitors.

The three managers (LL 8, 9 & 12), whose comments illustrated the ambiguities surrounding the outcomes of development, described their confusion over the company's reward strategy, the potential links with career development and the general appropriateness of opportunities on offer. For example, LL 8 described his frustration over the rapidly changing work requirements and the seemingly impossible task of achieving the targets which are set: *'[He did have some kind of plan about where he wanted to be but the goal posts are always hanging and you get to that stage and things have moved on and you want to get to that next stage.'*

Two managers (LL 1 & 7) fit into the third category described above, because of their common dislike for participating in formal development activities. LL 7 based his views on previous experience, while LL 1 opined that he would be more likely to update his skill through more informal avenues, such as reading from textbooks. He stated that he was *'at a stage in my career where he had got the tools to do my job well so much of the learning is tuning'*. These factors provide an insight into why managers may be slightly less motivated to participate in further formal development activities.

c) Managers in high category (good prospects of participation)

Only two managers (LL 3 & 4) were felt to display very high motivation to participate in learning activities. For LL 3 the fact that he was currently undertaking an MBA was concrete evidence of this. The main reason this manager gave for undertaking this qualification was to both improve his position and because he felt he *'didn't have a strong management training background'*. In addition to this reason LL 3 clearly saw the potential 'exchange' value in undertaking this qualification because, at the time, he *'was thinking about moving on as well.'*

For the other manager placed in this 'high' category (LL 4), although he was not involved in anything as formal as an MBA, his remarks implied that he was motivated to continue to participate in any learning and development activities which might help him in his position. He stated that he would find a way to negotiate any potential obstacles:

Interviewer: Is that fact that you work quite a long day an obstacle [to participation in learning activities]?

Not really, I think it would be fair to say, having said that, I spend a lot of my time these days keeping up to date with technical manuals and business documents. I suppose if I was to start thinking about doing correspondence courses now, it could be a little more difficult. ... I suppose now you might say it would be more difficult but if I had a particular goal in mind, I don't think it would stop me. I would find the time. (LL 4)

A3.2.4 Previous Learning Experiences – Cognitive (General)

The aim in these final two subsections of part two investigating intrinsic issues and learning was to establish if barriers to learning were manifest as a result of previous learning experiences. Firstly, in this section the managers' experiences of learning from compulsory up to third level higher education were analysed. Secondly, in the next subsection (A3.2.5) their work related learning experiences are discussed. Tables A3.7 and A3.8 summarise how the Lothian Life managers felt about both the compulsory or third level learning and vocational learning connected to their jobs.

a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

Table A3.7 illustrates the three categories of previous experiences from compulsory education and learning activities up to third level higher education. After analysing the interview comments of these managers, it was felt that no managers fitted into this category connecting reduced participation in learning activities to compulsory education experiences. In effect, there were four managers (LL 4,6,7,8) who communicated that they had particularly negative experiences at school or university. However these managers were placed in the 'medium' category because, in each case, their poor experience of compulsory and third level education appeared to refocus their attention on further vocationally oriented learning. These managers are therefore discussed in more detail under the 'medium' propensity section below.

b) Managers in medium category (some prospects of participation)

For the seven managers placed in this 'medium' category, the unifying theme was that, although they all appeared to have not had very good experiences during their full-time pre-work education, they were not inhibited from proceeding with further vocational type qualifications. Although one may consider that the previous experiences which they had could potentially affect their participation in the future.

Two of the managers (LL 7 & 8) clearly intimated that their experiences of compulsory (school) education was negative. LL 7 related how her poor perceptions of the school which she had attended, which she felt had *fairly poor academic standards*, had influenced her decisions regarding further education to the point that she was, to some extent, discouraged from attending university:

I wanted to be an accountant, initially I was not going to go to university because in those days you could join a CA practice and do an apprenticeship where you only went to university in the second year I think or 9 months. I went to interviews and I got a job with Thompson now KPMG but they said that it [accountancy] was becoming a graduate profession and that I may have regretted not going to university. So I just applied at the last minute and got a place and when I thought about it, I thought maybe I would regret not going if I didn't take the chance. (LL 7)

This manager went on to explain that she was unimpressed with university and was *'shocked quite frankly when I got there and it was so poor - you know I was expecting something much better than I had experienced at school - I was disappointed I think.'* The second manager, LL 8, also intimated that he 'didn't really enjoy school and therefore [he] wasn't really very committed to it at that time'.

Although not mentioning his actual experience at school, LL 4 communicated that *'probably not getting my degree at university that's a negative one'* was the most significant event for him in terms of full time education. This manager however, along with LL 8 and LL 7,

Appendix Three

appeared to have used past tribulations in pre work education as a catalyst for undertaking further vocational study. All three proceeded to successfully complete professional qualifications. LL 4's viewpoint is summed up below:

Interviewer: Has anything affected your decision regarding further study, for example, not completing your degree?

Yes, I think it forced me into taking some form of professional qualifications. I may not have done that if I hadn't finished my computer course so I think, from a personal point of view, it's been a one day situation until I took the professional qualifications which is something to regret, but now I'm quite balanced about it. (LL4)

In a similar fashion, LL 2 has developed preferences in terms of learning styles as a result of variable experiences of university education. He communicated that he would now be inclined to learn through practical experiential learning:

I would now find it hard to go back to that environment [university] and I much prefer learning from experience and finding things for myself. Although there's a place for the classroom teaching, I find practical experience and personal skills tend to go hand in hand. Most of my knowledge has come through experience and learning the hard way. (LL 2)

The fifth manager in this section, LL 6, was also considered to have a 'medium' propensity to continue with further study (especially of a formal nature) due to his variable experience at university where he did not achieve the upper second grade that was initially expected. However, as in the case of the other managers above (LL 4, 7 & 8), he still proceeded to attain a professional qualification (APMI) whilst working at LL. In effect, aspects relating to his experiences with respect to the vocational courses (Actuarial then the APMI) seem to have influenced his decisions regarding further study. Issues relating to these experiences for LL6 were discussed in some detail previously, where it was observed that he was now more inclined to participate informally in non-work related learning activities.

The common theme relating to the two remaining managers (LL 10 & 11) in this 'medium' propensity group was that their pre-work educational careers were characterised by uncertainty about future career direction. Both had changed their courses of study to enable them to follow a different career route. For example, LL 10 gave up an established career as a Chartered Surveyor (in which he completed a degree) to return to university and study for an Economics degree, while LL 11 switched from majoring in History to Economics at university. It is interesting to note that LL 11 decided to pursue the ACII qualification when he started working at LL *'purely for advancement and a fast track to promotion'*. LL 10 consolidated his career by participating in various courses:

I've been on a number of courses various times either directly to do with investment or probably things like PC training and certain management skills. It's been mostly on the job training by other people around me, superiors, and ad hoc courses from time to time, nothing very formal. (LL10)

c) Managers in high category (good prospects of participation)

As with the majority of the managers in the other case organisations studied, those interviewed at Lothian Life were well endowed with academic qualifications. The six managers in this 'high' category in particular forwarded comments that illustrated that their experiences in full time education were good.

In effect, the main theme prevalent amongst these managers was that learning per se did not appear to present any difficulty for them and was something that came almost naturally. As can be observed from Table A3.3, all but one of these six managers were graduates. When asked about their experience of education, the following responses from LL5 and LL9 were typical:

After leaving school in Edinburgh I did a 4 year course in Actuarial Maths and Statistics at Heriot Watt. I then joined Lothian Life after I graduated and started sitting Actuarial exams and after some years I qualified as an actuary, FFA, in 1988 and that was the end of the exam taking, the formal education part of things. (LL 9)

And:

Well, when I was at school I did 10 O'levels and 4 A'levels and I went to Bristol University and did a joint honours degree in French and Philosophy, which is why I'm in insurance [sarcasm], and joined here in August 1985 and qualified ACII in 1988 and that's basically it for formal qualifications. (LL 5)

In the main, these 'high' managers enjoyed their experience and realised that, although courses were theoretical and exams often irksome, they were something which had to be done to move on in life. In fact, one manager (LL 13) related that part of the reason why he undertook the FPC qualification was to 'test [himself] to see if [he] could still pass exams'.

A3.2.5 Previous Learning Experiences– Cognitive (Vocational)

a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

Two managers (LL 3 & 6) were identified as having a low propensity to participate further based on their experiences of vocational learning activities. The key issues here appear to be the potential consequences of negative experiences which, for both managers, could impact on their willingness to continue with further vocational training. In the case of LL 3, who was at the time of data collection undertaking an MBA course, there seemed to be issues surrounding the delivery methods used for such courses which would appear to have tempered his ambitions to participate in the future:

Interviewer: Do you have any preferred learning style ?

The traditional classroom method of a lecture standing up doesn't work very well, there has to be a combination of case studies and interaction as well. One of the criticisms I have of Edinburgh Uni Lecturers are that they lecture for 9 weeks solid and there's very little interaction. (LL3)

The second manager also experienced problems in balancing work, life and study. He talked at length about his failings in terms of achieving results through formal study; these experiences having led to his decision to concentrate on more informally based learning. LL 6 describes this sea change in his opinions, after having finally attained the APMI professional qualification:

Since then, there has been no formal study as such I am actually studying informally out with Lothian Life and out with academic subjects, purely for leisure - I'm studying beginners Spanish at the moment, linked more to family hobbies, holidays etc. (LL 6)

Both these managers attested that the lack of support from the company, in terms of undertaking vocational qualifications, contributed to their negative perspectives. This issue is discussed in more detail in the section relating to the Management Development culture in Lothian Life.

b) Managers in medium category (some prospects of participation)

Six managers were located in this section as a result of comments connected to their experiences of work related learning activities. The most important theme centred on experiences relating to professional vocational type courses. Three of the managers had completed the insurance-based qualification (ACII) one had studied to become a Chartered Accountant and the other had completed actuarial qualifications (FFA). Although all successfully qualifying in their chosen course, a series of issues arose surrounding the potential effect of their experiences on further participation in learning activities.

In effect, all the managers spoke of the difficulty of balancing work, life and study time. One of the managers (LL 9), whose actuarial qualification was delivered through correspondence, felt that working and studying was akin to *'keep ing] all the balls in the air, and so that's a barrier to learning really.'* LL 7 a qualified Chartered Accountant, again provided evidence that the pressure of working and learning were particularly difficult:

The homework exercises were the only thing, in the CA course where you were given them on a weekly basis and you had three or four exercises to complete. They were sent away and marked and sent back again and that was tough because you were working full time plus overtime plus travel and it wasn't very easy to do.

Int view r: Very difficult?

Yes and it would be even more difficult nowadays, I wouldn't contemplate it, you couldn't do it. (LL 7)

Two other managers (LL 4 & 12), who had undertaken correspondence based courses (ACII and ACIS), specifically spoke about the isolation and loneliness that they had sometimes felt while studying because there was *'not really the same opportunity to bounce thing off tutors'* (LL 4). In fact, LL 12 found it necessary to find an informal mentor in the

organisation. He stated that he *'tended very much just to do it him self and seek an expert within the organisation to work through a problem with if he didn't understand it.'*

As well as these negative issues, these managers also emphasised that the correspondence method of delivery had redeeming features in that it allowed them to learn at their own speed and at a time that was suitable for them. For example, LL 4 felt that the correspondence method was suitable for him at that stage of his career:

I suppose if I was to start thinking about doing correspondence courses now, it could be a little more difficult. But I did that at the right time in my life, the family were young and when I was baby sitting I was able to look over books and things like that. (LL 4)

c) Managers in high category (good prospects of participation)

In terms of experiences of work related and vocational training, five managers in LL were placed in the 'high' category. In the main, these five managers were positive about both the in house training courses and external learning activities. With this in mind, it was felt that there were high prospects of these managers continuing to participate in learning and development activities as a result of their previous experiences. In effect most of these managers appeared to be relatively flexible about further participation in work related learning and could see the virtues in most methods of delivery. The following quote from LL 13 typified this view:

Interviewer: What is your preferred method or style of learning?

I don't have any strong preference at all. Attending a seminar is great if you get a good presenter, good contact but it would be very bad if you don't. Correspondence learning has its advantages - you have to be self motivating doing it, have the time to do it, and I find it's not a difficult way to learn, I quite enjoy it. (LL 13)

Although illustrating their relative flexibility in a similar way, when other managers were drawn on a preferred learning style they indicated a preference for the more practically orientated and interactive learning methods:

Interviewer: What is your preferred method?

Definitely finding out for myself through trial and error. It allows you to get more in depth knowledge about the subject (LL 2)

And:

I'm interested in the practical side of things and the fact that we were physically doing something rather than mentally, I felt that was beneficial. (LL1)

As can be appreciated from the narratives attached to each of the managers in Table A3.8, most have had good previous experiences in relation to work related training and development. The virtues of such activities, ranging from more formal ACII correspondence courses to informal Outward Bound activities, were expressed. For example, LL 1 found that the Outward Bound course *'gave the opportunity for merging of*

managers from different departments and he felt that this was interesting, while LL 8 expressed his satisfaction at participating in the ACII course:

I enjoyed it because it broadened your view of the life insurance industry because we were all very focused on our own jobs but this broadened it a great deal and then when I got to the follow up, you started to do exams which were more to do with the management and this was very interesting (LL 8)

A3.3 Extrinsic Issues and Learning

A3.3.1 Organisation Culture

In this subsection, the managers' views in relation to LL's culture are explored. The narratives attached to each manager in Table A3.9 convey the most important aspects, which they mentioned about the organisational culture.

As with the managers in Central Life (see Appendix Two), the most important theme apparent was that, as the company has grown and changed, the culture too had evolved. Like CL, different managers seemed to have varying opinions about the changes, which had taken place. In the subsections below, the managers are categorised according to whether they displayed 'negative, neutral or positive' attitudes towards the organisational culture.

a) Managers in negative category (organisation culture inhibits learning)

Six managers were placed in this negative category as a result of their comments on the organisation culture. For five of the managers, the central message was that, although there had been inevitable change in the organisation, LL was still *'quite old fashioned in some of its procedures and habits'* (LL 10) in the comparison to other organisations. For those who expressed this opinion, the dominant theme was that the culture was such that it would have a detrimental effect on learning and development. For example, one manager (LL 2) described the culture being *'insular and cliquish'*, whilst another (LL 11) felt that, although actuaries were not as powerful as they used to be, it was still a *'male dominated'* traditional and conservative culture. The following comments from LL 2, who had a particular issue with how new technology issues were been dealt with, again illustrate the negative attitude towards the culture:

[The culture is] ingrained in the past I would say...I talked about technology but I don't think our entire management have got signed on to the technology and how we can use it and understand that it needs resourcing. They want to use it, they won't put the resources behind it, but they still expect you to get the job done which is not really very fair. They would be better to stand back and listen to the staff who are working at the lower level and see what they think should be done but they seem to have pushed their will too much. (LL 2)

Appendix Three

As can be seen, LL2 mentioned the fact that more senior managers appeared to be out of touch with the needs of employees at lower levels in the organisation and that this was influential in producing a negative culture. Other managers (LL 3, 12), expressed that the style and actions of managers higher up in the organisation succeeded in perpetuating this 'old fashioned' type culture, which ultimately stifled managers further down in the organisation's hierarchy:

Interviewer: Could you give some examples of this culture?

Well it's amazing the interest that those at high levels have on the staff. It may be done and dusted, where an employee would be dealt with and maybe sacked or whatever, and [in other organisations] it would never get above the line manager. In this organisation it very often gets to the very top and they will look at the issue and it will come back and I think that more or less sums up the culture in that there's too much control. We are encouraged to make decisions but they are often questioned and often it goes to the very top and sometimes people see that and say, well what's the point in making decisions unless they get the view from the very top because they might change it. (LL 12)

LL 3 made a similar point about the effects of this 'control' type culture:

The traditional management style from the top, which is what you see, has been characterised by lack of trust, which has affected the way people expect to do their jobs, they don't expect to be given responsibility and they really want it. ... For the culture in terms of managers being paternalistic, its lack of trust, it's the inability to let go. (LL 3)

In essence, these managers felt the culture in place in LL had not changed for the better and, hence, vital cultural elements (particularly the control element from senior managers) could cause problems in relation to learning.

The last manager (LL 6) in this 'low' group conveyed another perspective on the organisation culture which suggested that the organisation had moved too far from its traditional paternalistic roots. In his opinion, the organisation had certainly moved away from a 'friendly to a less friendly office' and he went on to describe two instances where he felt colleagues had been poorly treated. For example, he recounted how a colleague with 28 years experience was 'advised' to take voluntary redundancy because, as far as he could see, 'the person's face did not fit'. He went on to point out that this manager proceeded to be very successful for a competitor company of LL. As can be observed by reflecting on Tables A3.4-A3.8, this manager was consistently located in the 'low' category in terms of intrinsic issues. The fact that he was relatively negative throughout could be an indication of his dissatisfaction with the LL culture and, in effect, he readily admitted that his views on the culture could possibly have been 'tainted by his own situation.'

b) Managers in neutral category (elements of culture undermine learning)

Four of the managers were placed in the neutral category in relation to their perceptions of the company culture and its effect on participation in learning activities. The distinguishing

feature separating them from those who were placed in the 'negative' category was their pragmatism regarding the culture change in the organisation. Basically, these managers appeared to think that some changes had improved the organisation culture, there was nevertheless a need for the organisation to address issues and to ensure it could compete in the modern financial services environment.

The common fear for these four managers was that, as the organisation changed, some of the positive aspects, which may have initially attracted them to work for LL, could have been lost in the process. Perhaps the biggest fear was the potential disruption to staff/management relations in the organisation. The comments of LL5 sum up the typical view:

The company used to be more of a...well we're a small to medium sized company, much smaller so it was the kind of company where you knew everybody and you felt. ...well family atmosphere is the wrong term, it was a company that people felt quite proud to work for and you'd defend it in public. ...you felt quite loyal towards them. I think the culture of the company since it became more commercialised, ... that the humanity that singled out the company in the past isn't as much there anymore. Because it reduces everything to statistics, people are in danger of becoming small cogs in a large machine rather than being tapped for their individual potential. ... But its culture internally is that it's having to be more cut throat and whether you have to do that to achieve that end [commercial success] I don't know, but from a management point of view, that's not the best way to nurture the staff and keep them loyal to you. The question of loyalty is less important, ... but this time round, there's the feeling that no one's indispensable. (LL 5)

The comments of LL 7 and 8 were very similar, in that they mentioned how employees were now more '*questioning of management*' and always seemingly looking for '*ulterior motives...behind decisions*' (LL8). For LL 13, issues surrounding the increase in deadlines and work pressures were the main concerns. However, his comments echoed the other managers in that a certain amount of pragmatism was apparent regarding the need for change in the culture. In essence, the comments of LL 7 appeared to encapsulate the general pragmatic mood amongst managers. While she understood the anxieties of both staff and managers alike, she also felt that the culture of LL was: '*paternalistic but less so than it perhaps used to be, because you have to face reality*'.

c) Managers in positive category (organisation culture facilitates learning)

The three remaining managers (LL 1, 4 & 9) were all upbeat about the culture. They conveyed that the culture was now more balanced between the commercial realities of the market and the need to care and nurture staff. LL 9 felt that the organisation was 'more reactive now than hitherto, the sleepy mutual image [being] dead and buried'. He went on to illustrate how the organisation had taken the right path to change. Ultimately, the needs and viewpoints of the staff were considered integral to this:

Appendix Three

So we're a consistent employer, you might say, employees might not always like the answer they get back but there's some business decisions and we're looking for answers to questions but I think on balance, we're a fairly caring organisation. There are staff committees and they're listened to. (LL 9)

The other two managers (LL 1, 4) were also quick to defend the organisation's culture, pointing out its good record on communicating with employees and managers and the genuine caring attitude which it had for its employees:

For example there's a girl who's just fell pregnant and she's only been with us a few months and they're working out a plan so she can take maternity leave so there's a lot more flexibility. People maybe don't realise how much effort goes into that but it's a lot. I think more so than any other company I've worked for. (LL 1)

A3.3.2 Management Development Culture

In the subsections below, the managers' comments in relation to the learning and development environment within LL are discussed in more detail (See Table A3.10). As before, the thirteen managers from LL are separated into three groups according to their comments regarding the MD culture in place in the organisation. In these sections, particular emphasis is placed on how the informants rated elements such as senior management support, structures in place for learning and the availability of opportunities.

a) Managers in negative category (MD culture inhibits learning)

As can be seen in Table A3.10, three managers were displayed particularly negative attitudes towards the learning and development culture. Essentially the three managers were cynical about the level of support that they received for learning. Perhaps the best example of this was LL 3, who at the time of the interview was undertaking a part-time MBA. Although this activity was sponsored by the organisation he was less than happy with the level of commitment or support given by the company:

As I'm being sponsored by the company, I'm asking for input to the sorts of things they think I should do, say for example we do 16 courses, 7 are core and 9 are optional and we choose 9 from 35. I've tried to lay out the courses and the ones I want to do, but trying to get feedback is very hard. It's a case of OK, 'on you go or what is this course, what does it mean' and I'm finding it difficult in that respect. Dissertation-wise, well I have a lot of thoughts on the area but getting people to sit down and say, that's OK, well I'm just carrying on regardless. (LL3)

When LL 3 was asked to describe the MD culture, his comments clearly indicated that there were few opportunities and that *'things that have interested me in the course are things that we don't do at all here. One of my hopes is that when the [present Chief General Manager] retires or is replaced that this will change.'* He summed up the MD culture in the most negative terms:

It's a case of drowning as well, if you come to the company and look like you're good and can do the job, they just keep pulling you out to deeper water until you start to struggle and they leave you there for a while, giving you very little training. (LL 3)

The other two managers effectively purveyed very similar views about the culture in relation to MD, with LL 2 intimating that he would *'find it difficult to convince'* his line manager of his need for development. LL 5 forwarded opinions which showed that he was less than enamoured with the support in place in terms of guiding managers to potential beneficial courses, stating that often *'you were left to your own devices'* in relation to development. Another important point which he made was that he got *'bogged down in short term work, printing information and other management activities and had little time to think he was not evaluating himself enough which means he couldn't identify the areas in which to develop.'*

b) Managers in neutral category (elements of MD culture undermine learning)

The comments made by six of the managers in LL indicated that they had certain suspicions about the culture in terms of learning and development. However, these managers, who were felt to have rather neutral attitudes towards the MD culture in place and did not appear as negatively disposed towards the culture as their colleagues in the above category.

In the main, the general message from these managers was that, although the MD culture did appear to be improving and moving in the right direction in terms of support, structures and available opportunities, they did appear to have certain reservations. The comments of five of the managers (LL 6, 8, 10, 11 & 13) indicated that while there was more activity and attention paid to MD, more senior managers were perhaps not as aligned as others:

...4 or 5 of us at my level went to a strategic management course - it's fascinating, very interesting and relevant and it's very obvious who should be doing it but it's not a priority as far as senior management is concerned. (LL 13)

And:

I would say, as I said earlier, this has been given a much higher priority over the years. I don't know if I would go as far as to say there's a real culture of training and development, I think it's coming, it's improving, you're never sure if it goes to the top or if they're paying lip service to the idea. I don't know the answer to that, I think it's half and half, it's improving. (LL 10)

Other themes emerged surrounding the structures in place, with three managers (LL6, 7 & 8) being more than a little sceptical about the provisions for such eventualities. For example, LL 6 found it difficult to describe the MD culture because he felt that, at his level, he could not see an *'obvious impetus ... coming down [from next level of management to say you must go on this or that or you must improve. So it's difficult to know what the culture is from his level']*. LL8 suggested that the best description for the MD culture was 'ad hoc':

I tend to watch what other people do, I watch what my boss does, what our general boss does the top man and you think, oh yes, that's interesting I could do that or you think I wouldn't want to do it like that. So you try and learn by copying people, but it's a bit ad hoc really.

Interviewer: But there is no mentor?

There isn't. I suppose in some respects, [my boss is] my mentor and I try and learn from him but it's more an informal thing, it's just because of our relationship. I think a mentor would be really good although it depends how good your mentor is. (LL 8)

c) Managers in positive category (MD culture facilitates learning)

The remaining four managers (LL 1, 4, 9 & 12) were placed in the positive category in relation to the MD because any constraints present did not arise from lack of structure, support or opportunities to participate in learning activities. These managers felt that a more realistic culture in relation to managerial development was in place now than in the past. LL 9 pointed out, 'nobody will stop you learning or trying to learn, as long as you get the job done, that's the first thing.'

Although these four managers cited performing their daily duties as their principal objective, they also felt that there would be no barriers restricting them from partaking in development opportunities.

A3.3.3 Physical Resource Issues

The aim in this section is to attempt to understand whether these managers felt that factors relating to physical resources (time, geographical location and costs) provided a barrier for mid career managers. Table A3.11 illustrates the managers' perspective in relation to how physical resource issues impacted on their learning and development activity.

a) Managers in negative category (resource issues inhibit learning)

For six of the interviewees asked the question '*what factors do you think have inhibited your participation in learning*', the response was related to time pressures. The most important element for these managers was the freeing up of time to take part in developmental activities. The following comments from LL 9 and LL 11 starkly sum up the situation for managers at this mid career stage:

Now though the barrier to learning and further learning is without doubt the office activity. I'm busier now than ever before and there's no sign that that's going to diminish, and that's just the market place we're in now, if you're not running very fast to do your job, there'll be some guy that's running faster behind you and he's going to get it ... Other than the things I've spoken about, I think the workload is the significant and main barrier, almost exclusively, I don't think there really is anything else. (LL 9)

And:

Yes I suppose really over the most recent past I think it has probably been the pressure of work. It is a definite factor and the company line is that time must be given for training initiatives. [But] I have been assigned to go on courses and I have had to drop out just because things could not wait and things have cropped up that needed attention, so that's it really. I think that is probably it and nothing really else comes to mind. (LL11)

Appendix Three

In their interviews, these managers clearly related how they experienced inevitable time pressures. For example, LL 12 spoke about the *'physical tiredness at the end of the day'* and admitted that the thought of undertaking more development was unappealing. Similarly, LL 2 felt that the level of physical pressures being put on employees was *'not healthy and it was working right through all the staff grades'*. This manager also felt that, especially at managerial grades, it was a *'case of information overload, with managers not having enough time to answer the huge amounts of e mail they receive - it's just technology gone daft whereas with bits of paper, at least it was controllable.'*

For these managers' time and physical resource problems were high on the agenda in terms of barriers to learning. However it was worth noting that at least two of these managers strongly communicated that due to the geographical location of certain developmental events the problem of freeing up time to participate was exacerbated. An extract from the interview with LL 2 clearly illustrates the typical problems in relation to this issue:

Interviewer: In terms of Scotland as a geographical region, do you think there's enough provision for learning for your job?
I don't think there is, no. Most of the training courses are down south, obviously because that's where the greatest collection of people are. It makes training harder to organise because it's more expensive to go away. I would like to see more things organised for the central belt.

Interviewer: So it does put you off then?

Yes, it's a lot easier to organise a course if you're doing it in Edinburgh. You don't have hotel expenses, you can still see your family and still take part in things in the evenings whereas if you're going away from the office and the family you've also got the additional expense and it's definitely a factor. (LL 2)

LL 13 also outlined the problems inherent with having to travel long distances in order to get to a course. His comments show that the cost of attending events was prohibitive for managers – especially if such events were based in the South of England:

A lot of the conferences you get are in London and every day I will get mail about one or more conferences. In terms of it being relevant to my job, yes, I'm involved in the contribution schemes but in my view they don't have a future and it's not worth my while spending £800 for a conference to tell me that, especially if it's in London. If it had been a half day seminar in Edinburgh at a normal cost I might have gone, but I can't afford to take a day out and spend £800 to go to London (LL 13)

b) Managers in neutral category (certain resource issues undermine learning)

Only one manager (LL 7) showed a neutral attitude towards the question of resources. In common with majority of the sample, she found that resource issues relating to time and cost were a hindrance to further participation. However, she exhibited a fairly pragmatic and positive approach towards the future in comparison with those in the previous group. Although she cited 'time factors' as being high on the list of inhibitors, it was apparent that other factors also influenced her levels of participation:

Appendix Three

Interviewer: Are there any factors, which have inhibited your activity in any learning activity?

Lack of time, lack of knowledge of what is out there in some areas - in management development type of area you don't really know what is out there and you don't know how good it is. Technical stuff you have a grasp on - that's really what inhibits you, having to do your job and not having the time

Interviewer: In terms of not knowing what is out there - is that related to not having other colleagues who can basically advise you informally.

Yes with the presentation skill course other people had been on it and had said it was worth going on. But I mean I have been to all the basic sort of time management, how to run a meeting, report writing and all the basic stuff. I did all that ... while I wouldn't pretend that there is not an awful lot more I could learn about it the sort of availability of courses for people like me where you are wanting something that is more advanced or is going to teach you different things. I have no idea what is out there. I know there are MBA programs and things like that, but what someone like me would be more interested in would be courses which last for maybe 2 or 3 days because you could probably make the time for that if you were convinced that it was going to be worth it. ... I actually think [MD] is quite important but it is a question of being convinced that you are going to do something that is worth it and knowing what it is that you could be doing where you could go to learn this kind of stuff. (LL 7)

The above comments from this manager are consistent with earlier remarks about the MD Culture in LL, where she outlined the lack of opportunities both within and out-with the organisation.

c) Managers in positive category (resource issues not a factor for learning)

Although six managers from LL were placed in this positive grouping, it should be noted that, as with the majority of managers across the five case organisations, they also felt that time and other physical pressures were important factors when considering participation. However, they felt that the onus was on them, as managers, to try to address the problems that lack of time and other resources could pose.

In effect, there was an underlying reluctance to use the excuse of lack of time as a defence for non-participation. Five of the managers held the view that where worthwhile developmental activities existed, they would be keen to participate. LL 4 summed up this viewpoint, stating *'if I had a particular goal in mind, I don't think it would stop me. I would find the time.'* LL 3, while acknowledging that time issues were still the main 'constraint', illustrated his ability to evade such obstacles by studying part time for an MBA: *'The main reason for me doing it through lectures is that I have 2 young children and I need time to go away and focus on lectures. Pressures at home would be too much to do it by correspondence.'* (LL 3)

LL 1 felt he could overcome time constraints in a logical way through discussion with his line manager: *'In terms of personal education he tended to plan what he might require and discuss it and find how it can be achieved personally or otherwise. [He didn't feel time constraints, he didn't feel there were any risks.]'* (LL 1)

Two of these managers (LL 5 & 6) suggested that the responsibility for personal development should lie with the individual, LL 5 stating he should 'grab things [his own

development] by the scruff of the neck more'. LL 6 forwarded a similar view as he described the '*double edged sword*' of development and work related tasks. This manager indicated that as a result of the increasingly changeable organisational culture his priorities may change, and development may have to be moved higher up his agenda, and time difficulties would have to be surmounted:

From a personal point of view, my opinion has changed in recent years in that I am now looking after number one. Certain experiences within the last few years concerning staff give the impression that the company has lost its caring attitude. It's simply that which has led me to think about looking after number one.... (LL 6),

The last manager in this group held a unique view about the effects of time pressures on his participation in learning and development activities. The following statement shows how physical resource problems relating to time and costs had spurred LL 8 into undertaking more learning and development:

Yes, they have [time pressures had an effect on learning] and ironically, in a positive way because I think that Lothian Life is very conscious, So they're always looking for the staff to become more efficient and part of the way they're doing that is having them better trained, trying to get them more motivated. So I think this has had a positive effect because they see training as a way of achieving that - making them more efficient, better qualified and more competent at their jobs so I think this has had a positive effect. There is always the pressure of time and I think they're very conscious of that, they're trying to make time for people to learn. (LL 8)

A3.4 Summary and Conclusions

This section summarises the key findings and conclusions in LL in relation to:

- Intrinsic issues
- Extrinsic issues
- Final remarks

A3.4.1 Intrinsic Issues: General Themes and Conclusions

Table A3.1 below illustrates the position of each manager in LL in relation to propensity to learn according to each of the intrinsic factors and learning. The rationale for constructing these tables is discussed in Section 4.3 of Chapter Four. From the table some interesting conclusions can be drawn regarding intrinsic factors and their affects on learning. Each barrier is now discussed in turn in order to extract the main points of interest from the interviews:

a) Perceptual

- Only 3 managers (23%) displayed a particularly high perceptual need to continue to participate, the majority of sample in medium (38.5%) or low (38.5%) categories.

Appendix Three

- Managers in low category (5 managers or 38.5%) - perception that formal learning would not enhance careers at this stage of life (all relatively young in age range 40-43 years and three with young children), fact that very highly qualified (actuary, accountant and three professional qualifications) already also a factor.
- More pronounced realisation of need to continue from managers in medium category, but appeared to lack knowledge or guidance about what development to undertake to do to reach next level
- Managers with highest perceptual need also youngest and in possession of highly technical skills – desire to develop managerial and people related skills in main.

Table A3.1 - Intrinsic Factors and Learning for Managers in Lothian Life

Mgr	Perceptual	Emotional	Motivational	Cognitive (General)	Cognitive (Vocational)	Ratings (Total)
LL1	M [2]	H [3]	M [2]	H [3]	H [3]	13
LL2	H [3]	M [2]	M [2]	M [2]	H [3]	12
LL3	H [3]	L [1]	H [3]	H [3]	L [1]	11
LL4	M [2]	M [2]	H [3]	M [2]	M [2]	11
LL5	M [2]	L [1]	M [2]	H [3]	H [3]	11
LL6	L [1]	L [1]	L [1]	M [2]	L [1]	6
LL7	L [1]	M [2]	M [2]	M [2]	M [2]	9
LL8	H [3]	M [2]	M [2]	M [2]	H [3]	12
LL9	L [1]	M [2]	M [2]	H [3]	M [2]	10
LL10	M [2]	L [1]	L [1]	M [2]	M [2]	8
LL11	L [1]	L [1]	L [1]	M [2]	M [2]	7
LL12	L [1]	M [2]	M [2]	H [3]	M [2]	10
LL13	M [2]	M [2]	M [2]	H [3]	H [3]	12
Totals	H=3[23%] M=5[38.5%] L=5[38.5%]	H=1[8%] M=7[54%] L=5[38%]	H=2[15%] M=8[62%] L=3[23%]	H=6[46%] M=7[54%] L=0[0%]	H=5[38.5%] M=6[46.5%] L=2[15%]	

b) Emotional

- Majority (54%) of managers in medium category, displaying a degree of uncertainty regarding future career direction, whilst managers with more marked emotional barriers related either to fears and insecurities, or in contrast over complacency accounted for 38%.
- Main factor for young managers with young families (35, 38 and 40 years old) in low category was related to the feeling of insecurity and frustration at the insufficient knowledge of which potential learning activities to participate in at this stage. For the two older managers there appeared to be complacency and security but as a result a low likelihood of further participation.

Appendix Three

- Representative of the insecurity felt in this organisation was that the majority (53) were uncertain about future career direction, but could still draw reassurance due to fact they were highly qualified and held marketable skills.
- Only one manager (8%) in high category was assured and ambitious for future and did not display emotional factors that may inhibit participation.

c) Motivational

- Only 2 managers (15%) of sample appeared to be very motivated to undertake further development – one young manager (35 years old with young children) illustrating motivation through MBA participation and older manager (47 years old) wishing to progress further and hone skills.
- Majority of managers were either in medium (62%) or low (23%) of sample indicating low or constrained motivation for many.
- Low motivation and propensity – not very old (40, 44 & 43 years) yet complacent and not proactive enough to participate further or de-motivated by potential to get embroiled in politics further up hierarchy.
- Medium managers – constrained by host of reasons: lack of time due to family commitments, ambiguity of rewards accruing from participation and, poor perceived quality of MD events.

d) Cognitive

- No managers in low category indicating that rest of sample in either positive 'high' (46%) or 'medium' (54%) categories in relation to formal educational experiences.
- Managers (46%) in high category in terms of compulsory learning experiences – High achievers with positive experiences of formal education, and formal education methods came naturally for them.
- For medium category managers – school and university seen as 'means to an end', not particularly enjoyed and fact that majority (5 from 7) went on to get more professional examinations indicates a deficiency in formal learning.
- Work related vocational experiences – sizeable minority (38.5) who were mostly indicating good experiences relating to work related formal (two completing ACII successfully) and informal work based learning.
- Only 15% were very negative about work related learning – one of whom was currently undertaking an MBA whilst working, but was disappointed with lectures

method of delivery. The other manager completed professional qualifications but only after failing actuarial first which was impossible to complete whilst working.

- Largest proportion of managers (46.5%) who were mostly professionally qualified (actuarial, accountancy, ACII), but felt that working and studying was difficult and could have been facilitated better by organisation.

A3.4.2 Extrinsic Issues: General Themes and Conclusions

Table A3.2 illustrates the aggregate findings relating to the extrinsic factors influencing participation in learning.

Table A3.2 Extrinsic Factors and Learning for Managers in Central Life

Mgr	Organisational Culture	MD Culture	Physical	Ratings
LL1	+ [3]	+ [3]	+ [3]	9
LL2	- [1]	- [1]	- [1]	3
LL3	[1]	- [1]	+ [3]	5
LL4	+ [3]	+ [3]	+ [3]	9
LL5	\ [2]	[1]	+ [3]	6
LL6	[1]	\ [2]	+ [3]	6
LL7	[2]	[2]	[2]	6
LL8	[2]	[2]	+ [3]	7
LL9	+ [3]	\ [3]	[1]	7
LL10	- [1]	[2]	- [1]	4
LL11	[1]	\ [2]	[1]	4
LL12	[1]	+ [3]	[1]	5
LL13	[2]	[2]	- [1]	5
Totals	+ -3[23 o] =4[31°] =6[46°]	+ 4[31 o] \ 6[46°] - 3[23°]	+ =6[46] - 1[8° o] =6[46°]	

a) Organisational Culture

- All thirteen managers in the sample could detect that the culture was changing to some extent to enable LL to be more competitive.
- The majority (77%) either displayed their outright negativity towards the culture change or at least some concern about certain elements of it.
- Negative six managers (46%) – five felt that there needed to be more movement in culture specifically in relation to more senior managers who were too control oriented whilst one thought company culture had been damaged irreparably through change efforts and had lost family atmosphere.
- Neutral managers (31%) mostly younger who acknowledged that conservative and paternalistic culture was no longer viable, but still feared losing elements that had made company good to work for (staff loyalty, caring and friendly atmosphere).
- Positive managers (13%) culture now more professional and realistic for modern challenges whilst retaining most positive aspects.

b) MD Culture

- Positive managers accounted for (31%) and those who were negative (23 %) in relation to the MD culture in place.
- Rest of sample (46 %) was neutral - MD Culture was improving but deficient in places, especially in relation to senior manager support.
- Negative managers (consistently negative throughout and two from IS department) – ‘lip-service’ paid to development issues by more senior as well as line managers, where there was no learning culture present (managers often found out-of-depth without appropriate skills).
- Positive managers – never experienced any problems in participating in whatever development thought to be appropriate (two from IS department)

c) Physical resources issues

- An even distribution found between managers with negative (46%) or positive attitudes (46%), attitudes towards physical resource issues and effect on learning.
- Only one neutral manager, who was very senior (Assistant General Manager level) and felt that other factors also caused as much of a problem as having lack of time (desire to develop further).
- Negative managers – felt that time constraints were important but the managerial occupational hazards of ‘information overload’ and physical tiredness at end of day hampered them and colleagues participating in learning activities.
- Positive managers (all with young families) – were much more pragmatic about the need to continue to develop and viewed learning as essential and time had to be allocated even though it was difficult

A3.4.4 Final Remarks

The manager with the lowest rating (6) in terms of intrinsic factors and how they affected his propensity to learn was LL6. This manager who was 40, married with three children, professionally qualified (APMI) and who had worked within pensions in Lothian Life all his career, communicated several things that illustrated his low propensity to continue to participate in learn. One of the biggest factors appeared to be the death of his father, which had refocused his attentions on the more important things in life, like having a balanced work and home life. In relation to extrinsic issues it was interesting to note that he was also very negative about the changing nature of the organisations culture, which he

felt had meant that the family atmosphere had been lost, and he did not feel particularly loyal to it anymore.

Another manager who was consistently placed in the low category was LL 11, a 43 year old Assistant Marketing Manager married with two young children and professionally qualified (ACII). The main flavour that arose for this manager was his apparent contentment and complacency that indicated that he would not be likely to participate in much further learning at this stage in his career. Interestingly in terms of the extrinsic factors this manager was also rated lowly (4), where he felt that the organisation culture as well as the physical pressures he had inhibited learning.

It was interesting to note that LL1 had an aggregate score of 13 for intrinsic factors and the maximum (9) for extrinsic which illustrated that he was very satisfied with both the culture overall and more specifically in relation to MD in LL. He also communicated that he would not let physical resource issues hamper his learning if it was required. For LL 1, a 42 year old BSc graduate from the IS department who had four children, there was a good amount of confidence and ambition found in his comments. Although not allocated the highest ratings in terms of his perceptual need or motivation, it was clear from his comments that if learning were required to take him to the next level in the organisation he would participate.

Finally in terms of notable differences in LL, it was interesting to note that both managers LL2 and LL3 were rated highly in terms of intrinsic factors and their propensity to learn, yet much more negatively in relation to extrinsic issues. LL3, (35 years old, married with two children and educated to BSc level) clearly illustrated his perceptual need and motivation in the fact that he was currently undertaking an MBA. However it was also interesting to note his emotional insecurities here too in that he felt that he was getting very sparse support from his managers. With this in mind it is not surprising that he rated both the culture per se and more specifically relation to MD inadequate. For LL 2 (37 years old graduate, married with two children) it was a similar story. He was particularly negative about the extrinsic factors, feeling there was inadequate support or time to participate in renewed learning within a *'cliquish and insular'* culture.

Table A3.3 Lothian Life Manager Profiles

	LL 1	LL 2	LL 3	LL 4	LL 5	LL 6	LL 7
Age	42	37	35	47	38	40	43
Sex	M	M	M	M	M	M	F
Marital status	Marned	Marned	Marned	Marned	Marned	Marned	Single
Spouse	Housewife	Librarian	Teacher	Health Centre Receptionist	Training administrator	Craft Shop Co-managerness	NA
Quals.	BSc	BSc Computer Science	BSc Hons Mechanical Engineering	ACIS (Company Secretary professional Qualification)	BA French and Philosophy ACII	APMI (Pension Management)	CA
Children	4	2	2	2	3	3	NA
School Stage of children	19, 16, 14, 9	1.5, 5	4, 2	19, 17	7, 4.5, 8 months	11, 8, 8 (twins)	NA
Parents occupation	F – Upholsterer; M – Housewife	F – Law Accountant M – Bookkeeper	F – Civil Engineer M – Secretary	Shopkeepers M&F	F – Church Minister M – Special Needs Teacher	F – Royal Navy Lieutenant Commander M – Nurse (but didn't work)	F – Own business coach building M Housewife
Org title	Assistant IS Manager	Assistant IS Manager	IS Manager	IS Manager	Assistant Manager of Pensions	Pensions Manager	Assistant General Manager - Finance
Career history	Alexander Stenhouse (9 yrs); Olivetti (3 yrs); been LL for 10 years	Link Development Centre NZ	Babcock power, Heriot-Watt University	KPMG	Missing	LL all career	Audir Manager Ernst & Young
Distance from office	25 Miles; 20 muns by train	10 muns by car or 30 muns bus ride	5 – miles away – bus 30 mins	25 miles away	Missing	10 miles by train	20 muns drive
Hobbies and Pastimes	Snooker, swimming, family entertainment	Canoeing and Walking	MBA and Children (Hockey not any more with Children)	Walking, Socialising and Sports	Missing	Golf (4 handicap) and all ball sports	Not much – reading, Eating out, Gardening

	LL 8	LL 9	LL 10	LL 11	LL 12	LL 13
Age	39	40	44	43	41	46
Sex	M	M	M	M	M	M
Marital status	Married	Married	Single	Married	Single	Co habiting
Spouse	Housewife	Administrator	NA	Auxiliary teacher	NA	Exam invigilator – part time
Quals.	ACII	Actuary	BA Economics and Surveyor	ACII	ACII	BSc Chemistry
Children	2	2	NA	2	NA	1
School Stage of children	2, 5	9, 7	NA	12, 7	NA	22
Parents occupation	F Sub Postmaster M Housewife	F – Local govt officer M Secretary	Both Teachers	F – Engineer M - Housewife	F – Shopkeeper M – Housewife	F – Architect M - Housewife
Org title	Compliance Manager	Actuarial Manager	Senior Investment Manager	Assistant Manager - Marketing	Personnel Manager	Marketing Manager
Career history	LL all career	LL all career	CS for 6 years previously before University	LL since 1979	LL – all career	LL – all career
Distance from office	20 mins by bus	7 miles car	20 25 mins drive	17 miles – 20 mins by car	1.5 miles – car used	4 miles
Hobbies and pastimes	Family – takes up most time	Curling and golf	Hill walking, skating, tennis	Golf and Music	Sport, running, football and golf	Walking and keep fit

Tables A3.4-A3.11 – Lothian Life Tables Illustrating Evidence from Informants

Table A3.4 Perceptual issues and Prospects for Participation in Learning amongst LL Informants

	Low	Medium	High
LL1		Happy to learn on the job at present time – not really any interest for formal development at the present time. But not necessarily uninterested in development. Bias for on the job learning	
LL2			Self motivated and has initiative to arrange own development with line manager when required. [6]
LL3			Recognised the need to broaden managerial experience and therefore in the process of taking an MBA. However very sceptical about support that he has received in the company
LL4		Understands the need to develop and has a desire although not clear about what exactly he needs to do and hence may be barriers to learning present. But if had goal would try to find way around the obstacles [13]	
LL5		Sees the need for development and is proactive – illustrated by involvement in Insurance Society. Vicious circle between getting work done and development. MBA crossed mind but deadlines problem. [18]	
LL6	Comfortable with development needs at the moment and life in general. Not really wanting to move out with comfort zone. Series of factors have refocused life including family bereavement [5,9]		
LL7	Complacency is key here and also does not really see point in learning and development at this stage in career. Also has had experiences that have influenced her desire for more – sees doing an MBA (or other more informal dev) as being worthless now [3,6, 21]		
LL8			Comfortable about the need for MD activity – need for further development and willing to participate. [6, 8,17]
LL9	Sceptical about the value of MD in many cases – really needs to see the business benefits. Feels that work must come first and if forget about that then your wasting your time. Also emphasises the vicious cycle of working and trying to do development – but ultimately not that interested in development [15,16].		
LL10		Enjoyed previous learning activities but ultimately some inertia present for manager and may not see development as that important to him. Also a tendency to be a bit lazy. Still enjoyed the development activities that have been participated in though. [14,18]	
LL11	Done enough in the ACII – no inclination to proceed any further, certainly in the more formal way. Would appear to be more prepared to go for own pace informal development now [8,18,15]		
LL12	Tendency to be a bit lazy when he comes home from work and the thought of doing more not appealing. Feels he has done ok up to now without having to do the IPD qualification [3,5]		
LL13		Did think about doing an MBA but felt that could not really do it justice at this stage in career – similar views as LL5 [16]. However still a desire to continue to push on with career development.	

Table A3.5 Emotional factors and prospects for participation in learning amongst LL Informants

	Low	Medium	High
LL1			Few fears or insecurities enjoys the challenge of doing present job Would like to get to senior level – confident about contribution he can make. No fears for the future or in own ability [16,21]
LL2		Quite negative about prospects for development. Unsure about management's view of development – feels could be ultimately viewed negatively i.e. seen as having ulterior motives (to move on) if request more opportunities. Also not clear about future direction for career [2,12,19,20,25]	
LL3	Negative about the support that has received for MBA. Also regrets the wasted opportunity for both him and the company because it has not been managed very well Unclear about career path [20,21,22]		
LL4		Feels he is in a corner at present in terms of career Lack of knowledge about what future certain anxieties about future [21].	
LL5	Emotional problems centre on feelings of helplessness, where does not know what will happen in the future and how organisation values certain development activities – doing an MBA no clear indication that it will help career Generally confused about career direction. [11,14,15,17,18]		
LL6	Traits like shyness and not wishing to be exposed have affected participation. Guarded re: development in a group situation Father's death refocused attention about life direction. Unsure about future career development [5,7,9,14-17]		
LL7		Has in the past had some emotional problems with going out-with comfort zone. Video presentations had to be overcome, but still needs to be pushed to some extent [19,51]	
LL8		Trepidation about future direction of the company and his place within it. But not overly worried – has had head hunters on phone regarding vacancies. [23]	
LL9		Trepidation about the future can't see any ease in pressure internally and also externally. Potentially detrimental for development activity participation, but still fairly assured re: career security, i.e. head hunters contacting him. [10,15,22]	
LL10	No real fears about the future in company or his place in it. But complacency would mean that further participation not likely [27-29]		
LL11	Optimistic about the future for both himself and the company. But like above not much likelihood of further participation [33,36]		
LL12		Two opposing and conflicting views here. Likes job and does not really want much more challenge or responsibility, but at same time does not want to be stuck in this job for next 20 years [18,19]	
LL13		Recognise the insecurities although not a major issue for the manager [28,31].	

Table A3.6 Motivational factors and prospects for participation in learning amongst LL Informants

	Low	Medium	High
LL1		Although not keen on further formal development not appropriate at this stage. However is clearly ambitious in career and feel informal development can help now [12,16]	
LL2		Motivation constrained because feels that actually asking for more development could be detrimental for career in this organisation Could be perceived to be trying to move. [2,5,10]	
LL3			Motivated to undertake MBA to improve management skills for challenge that lies ahead if he is going to challenge for promotion [2]
LL4			Feels that he is a self-starter and is self-motivated and has surmounted any barriers in the way [2,13]
LL5		Would like to do an MBA but constrained by work and family commitments Also not clear about the specific rewards in place because no obvious signals given by organisation [18]	
LL6	Actual exams not completed (found working and studying very difficult. Had the motivation to complete APMI exams in the lead. Presently a refocus in life following father's death constraining force on motivation. All other organisational factors led to rethink on current and future position in LL [14,15]		
LL7		Not motivated by formal study at this stage. Feels study similar to CA type course could not be done now because of pressures in company. Also has been de-motivated by poor experiences of other MID events she has attended recently Really motivated by practical based learning now [28]	
LL8		Recognises importance of development but motivation constrained because is not sure about what opportunities will help with career However would partake of opportunities if implications for career were made clearer [14,16 17 24]	
LL9		Not particularly motivated by development activities – has clear views about the needs that are in place – not so sure if he needs it in this job at present Ultimately feels constrained by organisational and industrial pressures [10,16]	
LL10	Compacent and not outwardly motivated to participate in more development activities Happy in current job – development activities designed for career consolidation only [22,27,28]		
LL11	Confident about future position in the company but not particularly motivated to continue developing. Also pressures in job appear to constrain motivation [18]		
LL12		Ambiguous comments made - feels that he has little real ambition or energy to develop further and describes himself as being 'conservative', yet does not want to be in same job in 15-20 years time and therefore feels may have to get motivated to learn [18,19]	
LL13		Motivation is ultimately constrained by the pressure Would be hard to find the time to do an MBA for example – could be setting himself up to fail as a result of pressure – therefore no point. Did undertake the FPC qualification so fully understands pressures of exams and study [4,14,18]	

Table A3.7 Cognitive issues and prospects for participation in learning amongst LL Informants (Life – General)

	Low	Medium	High
LL1			Positive experience of formal education – completed a satisfactory 1
LL2		Generally positive experience of education although failed 1 st year at University which came as a 'shock to system', but managed to complete degree. Has produced some questions about whether there are better ways for him to develop [1,3,8]	
LL3			Generally good experience of formal education and no hungers to indicate relevant barriers emerging now doing MBA to broaden managerial perspectives [1,2]
LL4		Poor experience of University – dropped out and therefore felt he had to undertake ACIS qualification [1,3]	
LL5			Generally positive about school and university – did well at both although would not say that he particularly enjoyed exams – saw them as a means to an end like most people [1,4]
LL6		Did not get the 2 nd he needed to get job at LL but was allowed to come in as an actuarial student. Ultimately led to failure in those exams and a refocus on other professional qualifications, which were passed, but Actuarial experience has left lasting memories of combining work and study [1,5]	
LL7		Generally poor experience and did not have a very high opinion of school and didn't want to go to University. Both were poor experiences, especially lectures but did proceed to better experiences and CA qualification. Understands what she finds effective for learning as result of experiences. [12,39]	
LL8		Did not enjoy school and was not committed to it. This was the main reason for undertaking the ACII when joined LL, realised he needed to get a qualification [2]	
LL9			Generally positive experience of school and university and recognises that in effect the aim is to broaden ones mind and learn theory – ok with that, but different view of learning activities one needs to undertake in world of work – must be focussed to business needs and objectives [1,7,10]
LL10		Mixed experience of formal education – although generally successful. Initially undertook Chartered Surveying exams but changed career direction to return later (aged 25) to university to undertake an Economics Degree. Big change in career, and has experienced a wide range of learning – but hard to see direct effect on further learning behaviour [4]	
LL11		Generally unclear about what wanted to do in life – ended up at university where exams were viewed as a something which had to be done to succeed. [4]	
LL12			Not a graduate but ACII exams taken – generally nothing really standing out from these – experience of formal learning good [1,2]
LL13			University educated and really nothing really stands out very much. Although experience of degree may have influenced decision regarding MBA, because knew what is involved in study for degree [4]

Table A3.8 Cognitive issues and prospects for participation in learning amongst LL Informants (Vocational Activities)

	Low	Medium	High
LL1			Positive experience of any work related experiences that have been undertaken – led to a real preference for practically orientated training which he feels as most useful for him now [2,4]
LL2			Positive about activities undertaken at work. Values the practical oriented approach to learning most suitable way to continue to develop [5,6,8]
LL3	Mixed experience here – manager who is currently undertaking P.T. MBA, so he can get space to study. CC course could not provide that. Not particularly happy with course but this is intrinsically linked to dissatisfaction with support from the company for MBA [5,6,12,15,21]		
LL4		Series of good and bad points regarding the Correspondence course undertaken – loneliness and isolation is a problem but again good to be able to go at one's own speed. [13]	
LL5			Positive re work related activities participated in – no really to discourage as a result of previous experiences but not clear what is on offer at present for A.J. tant Man ger ev [18]
LL6	Found doing actual exams and working impossible and ultimately withdrew because of self-discipline problems. Did complete APML, but appears to have tainted view of organisation. However interesting in that is involved in tutoring and other outside learning at present for personal reason only [2,4]		
LL7		Found CA exams harder to pass and working full time too made extra difficult – good sense of achievement in passing them in end and course much better delivered than poor university and school experience. However has had variable experience in LL since – may lead to reservations about future development [1,7,11,12]	
LL8			Positive experience of ACII course – realised he needed to make up for a poor time at school. Enjoyed the experience and now willing to undertake other activities if he can locate them. [8-10]
LL9		Generally pragmatic view on vocational learning – actual qualification which was difficult and where there were ups and downs along the way. Realised it had to be done but was tough to keep going at times with family pressures and a family bereavement. Main thing now is that there is increasing pressure and there must be benefits in anything you do – difficult to 'keep all balls in air' [9]	
LL10		Generally positive about most of work related activities that have been undertaken. However 'cringes' sometimes at MD jargon used and feels it should be more practically orientated, and ultimately could put him off if something was designed or packaged under MD banner [20]	
LL11		Similar to above – after experiences with ACII feels that more practically orientated development is more suitable at this point in career [11,15,35]	
LL12		Found ACII correspondence course good and bad in equal measures, where the lectures that had to be attended being sometimes 'dry', also was difficult sometimes as a result of the isolation of it – had to seek out a 'mentor' in organisation for help [8]	
LL13			Neutral about experience – no real preferences as a result and hard to gauge effects of work related development taken [2]

Table A3.9 Organisational cultural issues (Culture of organisation and industry): Impact on learning in LL

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
LL1			Very positive about the culture in pace no real erosion in paternalism which is viewed as a good thing by this manager [24,25]
LL2	Culture is cliquish and insular little real openness or communication between departments people are inclined to stick together Also describes culture as being 'ingrained in past' [27]		
LL3	Too much control and interest in small and insignificant issues by top managers This is especially prevalent in IS department where there is no real delegation or responsibility passed down the line stifling to creativity [30 35]		
LL4			Generally positive about the culture staff are well served for by management - in the main most employees are happy Ultimately behind this is concern for clients and IFAs who there is no business without. [27]
LL5		Worried that the culture is changing and danger as a result to lose people element and for people to become simply 'cogs in the machine' where everything appears to be based on statistics and costs. Not the best way to nurture staff [29]	
LL6	Culture has changed very much to detriment of the company which is now described as being less friendly and more cut throat [22 24]		
LL7		Feels it is still paternalistic but less so than in the past need to face the reality of the market now. May be a knock on effect for employees but they also have to realise that there are far worse places to work than here [40 44]	
LL8		Feels that organisation is changing and although relatively accepting of need to change does mourn that slightly. Management staff relations suffer most here not so loyal anymore to the company and always now seem to be looking for hidden agendas now [32,33]	
LL9			Feels that the change has been ultimately good more consistency now Change needed really just the nature of the market no criticism of the LL culture [0]
LL10	Culture is old fashioned, but not clear how culture may affect learning – not helpful Sees some changes taking place but should go further to update [35 37]		
LL11	Little real opinions about the culture – could not describe it felt there was no defining culture in LL. If anything less dominated by actuaries but still problematic in that LL is male dominated and orientated Feels that middle management are always caught in the middle anyway [57]		
LL12	Too much control still from the top management in the organisation. Similar views as LL3 stifling for managers because they will not let go of issues and there appears to be little point in making decisions because the 'cabinet' will always have a say [25]		
LL13		Good and bad issues regarding culture now more communication amongst groups but so many deadlines and pressure now Pragmatic in realising that these are now needed in current environment Still certain amount of security present, but not so much even for actuaries [36 38]	

Table A3.10 MD Culture issues (Opportunities learning climate in organisation): Impact on learning in LL

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
LL1			Positive about the MD culture – feels that there are sufficient relevant opportunities in place for him primarily related to on the job learning and no problems with support from managers etc. [26, 30]
LL2	Negative about the MD culture – would be hard to persuade line manager if he felt the learning not appropriate. Little real support from managers amongst managers for development. [9, 19, 35]		
LL3	Poor culture in a number of ways, personally not getting enough support for the MBA – wonders why they sponsored it in first place [20-22]. Also indicative of poor culture is when managers are taken out to 'drowning' levels rather than be given sufficient training – actuaries doing jobs they are not trained for and very poor at. [34]		
LL4			Generally positive about the MD Culture – rea- s- s- c and enough support and resources given for training. [28, 29]
LL5	Negative and feels often left to own devices too much – needs more support and guidance about development. Development activities end up coming poor second to the administrative tasks he has to perform daily so needs to have high commitment to do anything which is not there now. [14, 15, 18]		
LL6		Support and structures in place are no where nearly good enough for this manager where he feels he has to overcome a lot of obstacles and barriers to get anywhere, but you can participate if you are prepared to try hard. [12, 25, 26, 28]	
LL7		Feels MD Culture is moving forward but has none the less got a longer way to go to be sufficient – appraisals [24] – would like more information on opportunities and mentoring etc. [27]	
LL8		Feels MD culture is changing for the better – good support from immediate manager [36, 37], but there are still more formal problems in relation to structures and top management support in the organisation. [34, 38]	
LL9			Does not see any real problems in the culture as regards MD but ultimately feels it comes down to the needs – cannot stress enough that need for work to be done properly, but if development helps that must be done. [31, 32]
LL10		Good and bad aspects of MD culture - appears to be given a higher priority, but sometimes feel that the top management are not so much aligned as other staff and managers. [38]	
LL11		Similar views as above, where there is a feeling that yes there is more provision and it is being raised up agenda, but other elements may deter development. [57, 60]	
LL12			More realistic MD culture now in place – realisation that there is a need for MD to be in place in turbulent external environment. Feels if request was reasonable then the organisation would allow for that. [27, 30]
LL13		Similar views as LL 9 - realised there are real needs to get work done first but MD culture changing for better. If a negative issues surrounding the top management support through [14, 39, 41, 43]	

Table A3.11 Physical Resource Issues (Time, place, costs): Impact on learning in LL

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
LL1			Pragmatic about the effects which pressure could have on development. If anything needs to be done (fine tuning mostly) then he will overcome difficulties. If in London then not a problem. [12]
LL2	Negative re pressure in place at present time and feels that there is a new deal for managers who are experiencing 'information overload' [24-26]. Also the fact that opportunities are frequently bug distance away makes it all the more harder. [17,18]		
LL3			Time to participate hard. Finding it hard to find the time for the P.T. MBA and also family pressures add to that reason for doing lecture based MBA so he can escape home life pressures and finds this is best way to beat the drum. [18]
LL4			Works a long day but feels that it does not affect negatively his learning participation. Feels that if learning activities were needed time would be found. [13]
LL5			Finds that pressure is there and is a problem and you do have to fight against deadlines. But it is all up to him to take things by the 'scruff of the neck' more and to avoid the double edged sword where there is development and deadline. [15,24]
LL6			Also feels there is a problem of pressure but also equally adamant that there is a real need to do something personally about the 'double edged sword' issue. [9,20]
LL7		Feels that getting time to develop is a major issue and first constraint really mentioned, but there are other factors which are important linked to actually wanting to be developed but also knows that there is a need to continue to develop but time is a difficulty. [14]	
LL8			Quite a unique view held here that as a result of the pressure there is actually more opportunities and realisation of need to continue developing. Really you have to make more of an effort to participate in development. [29]
LL9	Negative about time being spent at work and the pressures that are being heaped upon all managers as well as him. [1, 31]		
LL10	Time and pressure are the main issues similar to LL9 tendency to do the job first and to forget about development somewhat. [18,31]. London travel exacerbates problem. [26]		
LL11	Time is a problem and pressures get you 'waylaid'. [18]. A lot of things in this problem 'bump up the budget'. [30]		
LL12	Physically tired at end of hard days work – the thought of more development not appealing. [3,30,35]		
LL13	Similarly negative view as LL12 above – feels that time is the major reason why he does not participate more. [14, 43]		

APPENDIX FOUR

Grampian Life Assurance Company

Established in the early 19th Century, Grampian Life was Scotland's first mutual life office and, at the time of data collection, had grown to be the UK's sixth largest provider of Pensions, Life and Unit Trust products. Employing over 2500 people, the heart of GLs activity is based in Edinburgh where a new Head Office has recently been opened. In terms of gauging the size of the organisation, it is important to note that, with a client fund base of over £28 billion covering 2 million policy holders, GL is the second biggest Pensions and Life office in Scotland.

One of the reasons for Grampian Life's success has been its ability to diversify into new markets in line with the changing face of the industry, which has been achieved due to the forming of strategic alliances with other large organisations. It has moved from traditional products, such as Pensions and Retirement Planning, to newer but complementary activities including banking and electronic commerce. For example, a banking division was launched in 1995, offering products such as policy loans and flexible mortgages. This initiative is indicative of Grampian Life's multi-sales channel distribution strategy, which utilises Independent Financial Advisers, Direct Sales and Direct Marketing.

At the time of data collection, the company was committed to continuing with its mutual status. The company had gained a 5 star award for service from Financial Adviser's IFA Service Awards and had been notified of the retention of their Investors in People recognition status. In order to ensure continued success, the organisation had recently undergone a major downsizing and restructuring exercise.

A4.1 Organisational Context

In an attempt to obtain an understanding of contextual factors, particularly in relation to the company's HRD strategies and practices a semi structured interview with the Group Training and Development Manager (Group T&D Manager) within the organisation was undertaken. The broad findings from this interview are summarised below, however a more detailed discussion of these issues is shown in Chapter Five.

- Scotland's first mutual life assurance institution and since inception has grown to be the sixth largest life assurer in the UK through a strategy of diversification.
- A two way communication system has been introduced from top management to lower levels and vice versa (staff and management conferences a feature)

- Culture changed to reflect GL movement for life assurance organisation to 'financial services organisation' - described as being 'very business and customer focussed'.
- Central objective of culture change to ensure that managers were more empowered.
- Training and development - very competency driven but professional qualifications also encouraged.
- Responsibility for training and development now with individual but mechanisms to ensure support is given by line-managers and the T&D Department.
- Essential aim in moving for LiP - ensure good practice in relation to T&D was formally embedded in the company.
- No tangible benefits (monetary rewards) for completing formal development activities like ACII or MBA, but in theory such qualifications should help one to achieve objectives which ultimately drive the reward system.

A4.2 Intrinsic issues and learning

In the following sections, issues relating to the thirteen managers' intrinsic attitudes, behaviours and experiences are discussed with reference to the findings from the first part of the interviews.

A4.2.1 Perceived need for participation - Perceptual

a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

Table A4.4 highlights the findings relating to perceptual issues. After analysing their comments, in contrast to the other organisations studied, none of the managers in GL displayed any marked perceptual barriers to learning. To some degree or other, all the managers perceived the need to continue to participate in further learning or development activities.

b) Managers in medium category (some prospects of participation)

The observations made by seven managers indicated that certain issues related to perceptual barriers to learning could potentially be present. These managers tended to communicate that prioritising their time could be a reason from non-participation. For four of the managers in this 'medium' propensity cohort, their desire to continue to undertake learning appeared to be tempered by pressures arising from work and home lives and, thus, impacted on their perceived need for gaining new skills and knowledge. For example, GL 9 clearly summed up the problem that he faced:

Appendix Four

Interviewer: Moving on to participation, would you say there was anything that has been a barrier to your taking up learning opportunities?

I think pressure of work and having the opportunity to take time out. I certainly would have liked to have been able to incorporate further study and professional qualifications but simply the need to be here x number of hours a day to actually achieve the business objectives is too much. GL

Similarly, while GL 4 exhibited the desire to continue to develop, he found the pressures of work to be problematic. Ultimately, he realised that it was his responsibility to attempt to remedy this situation:

I do in my job about 12 hours a day and Saturday mornings, so I work quite a lot of the time. I think my fate to a certain extent is in my own hands because if I organise myself better, then I can probably go on these training courses. So I've actually got the answer myself, so the biggest barrier is overcoming the thing that there is appropriate delegation or more delegation. (GL 4)

For three of the qualified actuaries, (GL 5, 11, 12), the pressures of work also appeared to play a major role in determining their participation in development opportunities. They fully realised the importance of Continuing Professional Development (CPD), yet they had a bias for participating in activities (especially going on courses) which would provide them with practical information, which could be quickly incorporated into their jobs:

MM: In these courses, you've obviously experienced a lot of different learning styles, what is your preferred method of delivery?

Experiential. I've been on loads of course where you've come away with the course trophy, a stack of handbooks. ... they go into the cupboard and they stay there because as soon as you get to your desk there's a stack of other things that come along and going back and reading that stuff is a luxury that I've never found.

MM: So would you say it's a sort of need to know style that is most effective?

Yes, I would go and learn stuff myself for things like new computer packages. In any of those courses there are a lot of things that you know already but sometimes it's a good opportunity to sit back and question whether or not you're putting it into practice. (GL 5)

And:

Time is always a problem and you certainly go on some courses and find you don't use it for ages. I went to a course on dealing with journalists at one stage and came back and it was probably 3 or 4 months before I actually got involved with that but at the time I wasn't the front line person for doing it. I might have got a lot more from that course had I started doing it immediately. There've been others like that. GL 11

For the other two managers (GL 8 & 10) in this 'medium' propensity category, another issue emerged connected to their perceptual need to continue learning. When asked about her views on MD, GL 10 stated:

A lot of it. I mean in the company there's the traditional things you get about being a supervisor. I think what I'm looking for now is something outside, more in a wider sense, it's not people skills it's on a wider scale. Like the MBA type thing, I don't really know what that is. But you find that you go along to the e things and you think, 'well I know that already', it's how you put things into practice when you come back there's the difference. GL 10

The key issue for these managers was the need for them to be convinced that they will learn something worthwhile or gain new knowledge. The other manager (GL 8) intimated a clear desire to continue developing. However as she had recently taken on a new role in the organisation, she was having difficulties in prioritising her development:

MM: Do you see any implications for your career aspirations as a result of this hang in role in GL ?

I'm still trying to decide that - I guess it is a broadening experience and a broadening of my CV but I also worry that in my original chosen field I am missing out on development there and I'm going to have a problem going back to it. There are a lot of opportunities well in both fields really but I'm wondering if my opportunities may be better in the field where I was previously in. (GL 8)

c) Managers in high category (good prospects of participation)

The one predominant theme that emerged amongst the six managers who were classified in this 'high' propensity grouping was their realisation of the need continue to learn and participate in development activities. In their statements it was obvious that each of these managers had thought about what was the best way forward for them to develop in the future. For three of the managers (GL 1, 6, & 7) undertaking an MBA was something that they had either considered or actively investigated. For one of these managers participating in an MBA illustrated how ambitious he was and he saw this as a clear way of moving forward:

I'm working my way through the Chartered Insurance exams and I kept on putting off doing the last one because the industry said you had to do a Financial Planning Certificate (FPC) 1,2 and 3 and now advanced so I'm busy with that I just have to work on my advanced. Once I'm finished - the game plan is - I will use the ACII as a platform to get my MBA because that is what I want to do. My wife, she's got an economics degree and you know how much work is involved with studying so the idea now is that I'll crack on and do mine now. (GL 1)

The other two managers were interested in pursuing an MBA qualification for more complex reasons connected to enhancing their skills for their current or future roles in GL, as the below statement from GL 7 illustrates:

Well I have looked into doing an MBA and there seem to be a huge range of things you can do, but if I was going to do something it would probably be distance learning or Internet based. I don't want to do an MBA for the sake of doing an MBA but I would like to do some structured development on MBA type issues perhaps in conjunction with an external partner. GL 7)

The comments of the other three informants in this group illustrated their perceived need to continue learning to enhance their skills and career development. For example GL 2 communicated how she had identified a suitable course to enhance her skills, after discussions with her manager:

I saw a post advertised for how to get the best out of your direct reports and the person you report to... I felt I needed to become more proficient in getting people to work for me and managing my boss if that is the right thing to say, and it has actually gave me quite a lot of confidence and it is fun .. I get quite a lot out of it.

Appendix Four

Interviewer: So what was your main reason for undertaking that?

It was because we have been through an awful lot of change and we have turned into quite a dynamic company, that females are sensitive to far more than males, and I think I looked at myself and said that I needed to be able to look at myself. I seem to be getting into confrontation a lot with my direct reports for whatever reason and I thought trying to get the best out of the people who report to me or direct reports maybe that is just what I have got to learn and I'm getting better at it.

Similar views were also expressed by GL 13, who although being the oldest manager in this sample felt that there was always a real need to continue to develop and learn or enhance one's skills:

Interviewer: If you saw a course on it, what would you want from it?

In general, if I see something that I think looks good, then I am interested to go on it and I don't think well, 'been there, done that'. I'd want to find out what the objectives of it were, who it's aimed at, whether it's aimed at a particular person and not others. ... I think there is a lot of good training for management or for other areas that can be used for all your life and you shouldn't look at it and say well I did that 3 years ago and there's no point in doing it again. (GL 13)

The final manager in this 'high' category (GL 3) again illustrated how important learning and development was for her and her comments showed that she was keen to undertake developmental activities. However as will be discussed in the next section which looks at how emotional factors may impact on learning participation, she clearly had difficulties actually knowing what were the best things for her to do in terms of learning at this career stage.

A4.2.2 Fears or Insecurities surrounding Learning Participation - Emotional

a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

As can be seen from Table A4.5 only one manager in GL was placed in the 'low' category in relation to emotional factors after analysing comments made in the interviews. In the interview with this relatively young (35 years old) female manager who was educated to MBA level, she indicated her fears and insecurities about what was the best direction in relation to learning and development activities for her in the future. She communicated that potentially there was a danger that she would simply not participate in further learning activities if she was not given more guidance about the best way to move forward at this stage:

I have problems to be perfectly honest, and my problem is what's next for me. I mean they've just offered me a week down in Henley for interpersonal skills for effective management, and I turned them down and said well if I've got interpersonal problems then someone should be telling me by an appraisal but no one's coming back and telling me this, so what's the point. (GL3)

Clearly a large part of the problem for this manager was related to the organisation and how proactive her managers and others were in directing her towards appropriate learning

activities. This issue is something that is revisited when the issue of the MD Culture within GL is explored.

b) Managers in medium category (some prospects of participation)

From the thirteen interviewed managers in GL seven were placed in the 'medium' category because it was adjudged that in their interviews traces of insecurity or uncertainty either surrounding their own abilities or their positions in the future may affect their participation in learning and development. Hence amongst these seven managers two major themes were captured.

For five the main issue surrounded their future security and essentially how the more turbulent environment may affect their positions as managers. It was interesting to note that three of the managers who expressed such a view were actuaries who might have been expected to feel more insulated than most from the effects of the environment. However GL 7 clearly noted that:

Interviewer: What in your opinion are the most important external pressures on the industry at present and how do you see them affecting training and development and employment practices?

The pace of change. Obviously the pressures are driven by the bottom line it's a competitive market and there's the threat from the many new competitors out there. The change from having a workforce which most value is technical and moving away from that to one with more diverse competencies - this is a threat to me as an actuary, the marginalisation of skills, and I see that as a threat. The majority of people have technical skills, which may be superseded by technology so how to keep your skills up to date becomes important. Management skills now have to be more geared to being able to support people. (GL 7)

Also the fact that the organisation had recently gone through downsizing and redundancies did not escape another of these actuaries. GL 11 pointed out that there was still a *'feeling of insecurity, he didn't think [anyone] feels [their] job is safe and couldn't guarantee there wouldn't be another clear out next year – [he didn't] think there will be, but it could happen again'*. It was also mentioned by other managers (GL 12) here that with this insecurity around in the organisation elements that they took for granted in the past like staff loyalty were being slowly eroded. Such issues surrounding the general climate of GL are discussed in more detail when the organisational culture is discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

In terms of other emotional factors and their effects on learning three managers (GL 2, 7 & 13) did mention the effects that certain personality traits such as shyness, not being politically motivated or fear of being exposed in certain situations could affect their learning. For example GL 2 found that she did not have a lot of confidence in the group situation especially with other GL employees present:

Appendix Four

I'm not the most confident person – the confidence level goes up when you are dealing with people who you don't normally deal with. You are not watching your Ps and Qs and if you make a mistake you don't get so embarrassed and I found it a better learning platform to be honest. (GL 2)

However these three managers acknowledged their failings with respect to their confidence and shyness, through either undertaking some form of learning or moving to areas out with their comfort zones to address these problems. For example, GL 7 and GL 13 summed up how they felt they had went some way towards surmounting such emotional insecurities:

One of the things that the Dynergy [MD course participated in by several GL Managers] programme does is to encourage the qualities that you need, for example when you're basically a courageous person, courage is one of the key aspects of the course. People saw me as courageous and I saw myself as not being so, and I thought well, be more courageous and I became a bit more confident and tried things out. An example of that is that I moved from my comfort zone in actuarial to HR and I think that's a risk. ... I see that this gives me the opportunity to grow, to work for a bigger job, and I think that's a risk. So I think I am more courageous in taking more risks. (GL 7)

As can be seen from the below segment from her interview GL 13 also stated that she would now be prepared to move out-with her comfort zone more:

Interviewer: What I mean by risk taker in that context is would you be prepared to put yourself outside your comfort zone to learn more?

I would probably be prepared to put myself in that situation, yes. But there's always the question of would I actually do it when the crunch came. For instance I moved into internal audit which was potentially...it certainly wasn't a downward step...but it was into a completely new environment where I had to start learning new things all over again and that was fine. But standing up in front of 200 people is a completely different angle on moving out of one's comfort zone. (GL 13)

c) Managers in high category (good prospects of participation)

Five managers from GL were felt to display evidence in their interviews that they did not have any barriers to participation in learning activities as a result of any emotional factors. In general these four managers were confident about their own abilities in learning situations and also were optimistic (or at least did not express any fears) regarding their future positions in the organisation.

Two of the managers (GL 1 & 6) were considering participating in MBAs to increase their potential options for their future careers. Also there was clear indications that several (GL 4, 6 & 9) were ready to accept challenges and would willingly move out with their comfort zones if they felt that activities were worth doing:

Well I went on Outward Bounds and I was extremely unfit, but I went anyway and it was a good learning experience, I never mentioned that one earlier. I went on one of those as well. But no I will actually, if I have made the decision to be involved in the learning or the training or whatever it is then I will throw myself into it. I am not afraid to stand up in the middle of it and say, 'I actually don't understand what you are saying you are going to have to go backwards and tell me all over again' so I don't have worries about that sort of thing. (GL 6)

And:

When there is participation in the day and in the course that a lot of us done recently it was like every 2 minutes there was some participative event going on) I think you learn a lot from that. ... helps to bring out the more open sort of tendencies when you are posted these wee things and you have got your role and you have got something to achieve. So you find a role within that and you get used to it and sometimes you are asked to come out of your sort of natural safe and comfort role zone and do other things, so I quite like that challenge. (GL 4)

A final issue mentioned by one manager about the insecurity and uncertainty in today's environment was brought up by the relatively experienced GL 5. As someone who had experienced the downsizing and restructuring in the organisation: *I mean I know what it was like a few years ago, I know what it is like now', there is little to fear as long as you remain focussed on delivering and keeping apace with change'*. (GL 5)

A4.2.3 Motivation to participate in Learning Activities – Motivational

The aim in this subsection is to understand if motivational factors could potentially be important in explaining managers in GL participation in learning activities. As with the other sections here the managers are categorised by the levels of motivation, which they displayed in terms of training and development.

a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

From the details in Table A4.6 it can be seen that only one manager in GL (GL 9) was labelled with particularly low motivation. The main basis of his comments were that he could not really see what the likely rewards would be if he were to participate further, particularly in more formal learning activities. In the past he had dropped out of the ACII course because he could really not see how the qualification could enhance his career at that stage. In essence this manager felt that he had 'exceeded' his career expectations 'without much imagination'. Therefore he was inclined to align to the view as he put it of 'what's in it for [him] and, if people don't recognise the benefit in doing something, they're not going to do it', when considering learning activities.

b) Managers in medium category (some prospects of participation)

Seven managers were placed in the 'medium' category because essentially they showed characteristics of their motivation being constrained. Ultimately this could affect their likelihood of participating in further learning activities. Essentially three themes emerged amongst these managers.

For three (GL 3, 4 & 11), issues were clustered around the general theme of getting sufficient encouragement and guidance to actually get motivated enough to participate in

further appropriate activities. For one manager in particular, GL 3, when asked to sum up what she felt were the most important barriers to her participation her comments illustrated that motivation was probably the most important factor:

For me it's how motivated I am – it's self motivation and drive. Sometimes drive can be kicked out of you and I'm finding that a bit of a problem with me and hence, I've said drive comes from me and if I didn't want to do it, I wouldn't do it. There will come a point in the next couple of months where I will either go off and become a secretary, either go off and do a part time managerial course or an equivalent or I need something to kick start in another direction. I'm very frightened about becoming complacent. GL 3

As was mentioned previously this manager had some serious reservations surrounding the culture in GL both generally and with regards to MD and some of her motivational problems could be attributed to her perceptions of support from the organisation for development opportunities. For the other managers who felt that their motivation could be constrained to some extent by lack of guidance, GL 4 for example expressed that as you move through your career, if there is not much guidance, it is sometimes hard to conceptualise how far one can progress. Therefore he felt that his motivation could simply be constrained because there was some trepidation about how much further he could go:

The other thing you face is really how far you want to push your own career development. As you push you are also getting on a bit and it's my birthday today so I can actually say that, so you think well I've got 10 years left 10, 15 or whatever and think what do I want to achieve in that time. (GL 4)

The second theme that arose for three managers (GL 5, 10 & 13) was related to actually getting the time to participate in learning activities. Like other managers in the other case organisations the majority in GL felt that they were working in pressurised jobs and actually taking the time to participate in further activities could be a barrier. The comments of GL 10 provide a précis of such views:

I think now I don't think I could cope with so much study (formal qualification) with long periods away from work. I find a day or even a week is quite enough, so to get into that, has probably changed that way. I would probably go now for what I didn't then which is more like business learning type stuff. (GL 10)

The remaining manager in this 'medium' category also illustrated that her motivation was constrained because as well as working long hours and having a pressurised job the area that she worked within (Corporate Compliance) was *'fairly dry'*. Therefore it was sometimes difficult to get motivated to learn more about it.

c) Managers in high category (good prospects of participation)

Five managers were placed in the final category here, which indicated that in their interview comments they were motivated to continue to participate in learning and development activities. As has been mentioned in the section which discussed perceptual issues and

learning three managers expressed their interest in undertaking an MBA. With this in mind, these three managers were felt to have good prospects of participating in further learning activities. However, although they were highly motivated to continue to participate these managers showed their awareness of the potential pitfalls involved in undertaking such a formal course of study. Most of these concerns were linked to the potential conflicts that could arise in working full-time and studying.

The other two managers in this group were also felt to have high motivation, but their interest was in more ad hoc development, whether in the form of relevant courses or more informal on-the-job learning. GL 13 clearly illustrates her high motivation in the following statement:

What factors do you think have inhibited your participation in learning activities?

I don't think anything has inhibited me really. Time and work. Certainly if there's been something that I've wanted to do, it's hardly ever been a problem, it's not been prevented. I make a case for it and then I go ahead and do it. (GL 13)

A4.2.4 Previous Learning Experiences – Cognitive (General)

In the section below the managers' experiences of learning from compulsory up to third level higher education are analysed and, secondly, in Section A4.2.5 their work related learning experiences are discussed. Tables A4.7 and A4.8 summarise firstly how the Grampian Life managers felt about both the compulsory or third level learning and, secondly the vocational learning which they have received up until now associated to their jobs.

a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

As Table A4.7 illustrates no managers were placed in the 'low' category in relation to experiences, which they had of compulsory or full-time higher education. As with the previous case organisation studied, Lothian Life, there were a number of managers who did relate poor experiences or regrets linked to their experiences (or lack of them). However like the managers from LL these (two in particular, GL 2 & 3) managers appeared to use these experiences as a springboard into taking up further learning opportunities. With this in mind the circumstances of these two managers along with the other two who were placed in the medium category are discussed below.

b) Managers in medium category (some prospects of participation)

In essence two of the managers from the four in this group (GL 9, 13) here were fairly neutral about what had happened to them when they were in full time education.

For example in the case of GL 9, who did not proceed to any further education after higher examinations, there was an indication that moving into life assurance was something that was not really planned. In terms of how the decision to not go any further affected further participation it was interesting to note that this manager appears to have progressed to the managerial level without finding it necessary to participate in any particularly formal learning activities. Therefore one could speculate that because he has made satisfactory progress up to now in his career, he might think that more learning (especially related to more formal exam taking) might not be suitable for him. The below segment from his interview summarises his views:

Interviewer: Do you think it [experiences in formal education] has influenced your decisions regarding further study? Say for example taking exams?

I wouldn't have said so, no. I think it was more a case of having no clear objective at the end of formal education of what to do and then I started working in a life insurance company...which I think I fell into and then from there, developed. I actually did do some insurance exams, passed a few and decided there was no real benefit in actually studying relative to career progression, which could be made through other ways. So I didn't bother to persist with other examinations. So most of the development type work in employment has been mostly focussed towards performance and what I was particularly doing. (GL 9)

In the case of GL 13, who also displayed a neutral stance, she stated that with the benefit of hindsight and if she '*had known more about the world and work and so on*', she may have chosen to take different subjects (IT related) instead of Mathematics and Chemistry. However when asked if her learning experience had affected her decisions regarding further study, she was adamant that it had had 'no affect, positive or negative.'

For the other two managers, GL 2 & 3, as has already been mentioned previously, there certainly were issues surrounding their experiences of full-time education. For GL 2, there was a suggestion that because she did not proceed to higher education she felt sometimes slightly inadequate compared to other university educated managers:

Well, I think I'm quite shy and I have always regretted not going to University, always regretted it. I think I was one of the few female managers when I was made a manager and I wasn't an actuary and I'm the first underwriting manager who hasn't been an actuary. You know, I'm married to an actuary and I take off my hat off to them.... When I was promoted to be a manager, I didn't know if I wanted to be one. (GL 2)

Although this quote illustrates that the feeling of inadequacy appeared to still exist, there is an indication through other comments that she would be more confident in undertaking other learning activities now. This is evidenced in the comments that she made which were reported in the earlier sections related to perceptual and motivational

issues that indicated that she was highly motivated to continue participating in learning activities.

The other manager in this group also forwarded some interesting comments in relation to her previous experience, particularly related to her undergraduate period. She stated in the strongest possible terms how she 'hated' her experience in the first (MA in Languages) course she undertook at university 'but loved [her] post graduate course' (an MBA). When asked to explain why it was such a bad experience for her she revealed:

It was the way it was taught, the culture of the departments. I mean I knew I wanted to go to university and I knew I wanted to do a general subject because I didn't know what I wanted to do afterwards. ... I was 17 when I went to university and there are various issues there, I might have been a little more mature when I went back, but I got through it [but] I really found the culture in the department awful... It was too aloof, very detached from reality; perhaps it was because I realised in my own self that I was a very practical person. (GL 3)

Not surprisingly given the last part of the above statement, when she was asked why she felt so differently about her postgraduate course (P-T MBA) she found the whole practicality of the course more suitable to her style:

... going into the part time MBA, even then I was pretty young, there was a tremendous spirit and I loved feeding off people that were on the course.

Interviewer: So there were elements of networking as well?

I suppose networking is a good way of putting it, I feed off a lot of people. I'm not ashamed to say it but I'm pulled on by the people I'm working with and it's very important to me that those people are significantly ahead of me so I can learn from them and get pulled on.

Interviewer: So you feel that's probably the best way of learning, from being mentored or coached?

In an environment like business environment, it's exposure to certain circumstances that gives you the experience and also seeing how other people react in those situations, that's the biggest learning curve for me. (GL 3)

As can be seen from these comments, the experiences that this manager has had of university, both the undergraduate MA and postgraduate MBA, have made a major impact on her. It may be concluded that she may be more inclined to participate in practically and to some extent informal oriented learning activities in the future.

c) Managers in high category (good prospects of participation)

In this cohort of nine managers classified as having a 'high' propensity to participate in further learning and development, there were five qualified actuaries, one chartered accountant as well a PhD qualified manager. Like the other managers who were placed in this 'high' category in the other organisations studied, there appeared to be for many of these managers an acceptance that education and formal examination taking, was something that came naturally and which they did not need to think about. For example

when asked to outline their experiences of education the responses of GL 5 & 11 were typical of these highly qualified managers.

Formal education secondary was a local grammar school, standard of O Levels, Higher and Sixth Year Studies. Then went to Aberdeen University where I studied Maths for 4 years and I got an Honour degree and at the end of that I decided to come down to Edinburgh to join Grampian Life. Since then I've done the actuarial qualifications and was an actuary in 1984 and so there was an intense amount of study up until that time. GL 5

And:

First there was school and then I studied Maths at Cambridge University and I then did the actuarial exams. And that's about it (GL 11)

For other managers in this group, for example GL 1, GL 4 and GL 8 who did not possess such highly sought after professional qualifications there were other issues raised, mostly connected to less certainty about their future career direction. However, what came to the fore for these managers, as with the actuaries and accountants in this group is that there appeared to be nothing of any significance related to their previous formal education that would affect further participation in learning.

A4.2.5 Previous Learning Experiences – Cognitive (Vocational)

a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

As shown in Table A4.8, after analysing the managers' comments in relation to the vocational and work related learning and development activities undertaken, no managers from GL communicated such negative experiences to warrant their inclusion in this 'low' propensity category.

b) Managers in medium category (some prospects of participation)

Seven managers were included in this medium category after analysing their comments, which outlined their experiences of work based, and vocational type learning. From the seven included here, four managers (GL 6, 7, 9, & 11) mentioned their experiences of the Correspondence Course delivery method undertaken to gain professional qualifications. Three of the managers did eventually manage to pass their actuarial courses, but all felt that it was a difficult way to learn.

The main issue here was that because these courses are primarily self directed without much in the way of interaction and support, loneliness, isolation and laziness could inhibit ones performance. To combat this two of the managers found it necessary to locate

Appendix Four

support mechanisms either formal or informal) in an effort to help with their studies. For example GL 6 found that after 'a tutorial system in the office so he did have someone kind of prodding her along to get from A to B' was set up she found the course better. Similarly GL 7 found that he needed to attend 'a two day residential revision course that he did for his last exam' to get through the course.

For the other manager (GL 9) who did attempt the correspondence course ACII qualification perhaps the biggest issue was the fact that he had dropped out of this professional insurance course. In Section A4.2.3 it was shown that the primary reason he gave for ceasing to continue that course of study was related to his perception that it did not offer any real rewards, other comments illustrated that other aspects of the course were also relatively negative. These negative aspects were primarily connected to the way that the course was delivered, as the following comments illustrate:

Interviewer: Talking about learning styles, you mentioned you did insurance exams, how was that delivered to you and how did you find the delivery?

We're going quite a bit back now, delivered very badly at Napier by lecturers who had very little ability to lecture and correspondence courses, which were very unexciting. So at that stage, the syllabus was irrelevant to most people's day to day activity. Other than very basic principles, which were slightly interesting, most of it had very little relevance, which is why I didn't persist.

Interviewer: So it was really a question of getting a certificate then?

Yes. Plus I think if you were going to cram information, you'd probably be better learning about the Chinese wall or something. That would be slightly more interesting! (GL 9)

However this manager did go on to point out that he has had some very good experiences in terms of work related vocational learning like the Institute of Management Seminars (IMS). Also for example he found the 'dynergy' (internal MD Course) course very good and communicated that:

I got an immense amount out of and I actually ended up doing a speech at the managers' conference on the virtues of this approach, which was mostly a behavioural centred means of getting you to buy in and get involved. (GL 9)

For the other three managers in this category, GL 2, 4 and 13, various issues were raised with respect to their experiences of vocational learning and development. For example GL 2 felt that in GL the courses she has attended ultimately failed in that they did not really 'train her to be a manager'. Also GL 4 had had fairly poor experiences of being in courses where you had to 'passively sit and listen' for long periods. Lastly GL 13 felt that even with courses which were really enjoyable at the time, sometimes after taking up to three days out it was hard to get back to them again after clearing the backlog of work. Perhaps the most important message from these statements is that for managers in this position

short and very practically orientated courses of study are required which are directly related to the manager's role.

c) Managers in high category (good prospects of participation)

Six managers were placed in this 'high' propensity category after reviewing their observations in relation to the work and vocationally orientated learning activities. It was shown that they were in the main very positive about particular vocational activities they had undertaken and that their experience would not negatively influence further learning.

These managers were particularly complimentary about those learning activities that allowed them to some opportunity to interact and learn in a practical way skills directly related to their jobs. With this in mind several managers felt that as a result of these experiences they would want to participate further, and they had a clear idea about what it was that they were looking for now in learning activities. For example GL 3 felt that the MBA had influenced her in decisions regarding further learning so that she *'would definitely be wanting a lot of interaction from [her] peers and would also want it to be practical.'* Also for GL 8, who had undertaken several practically orientated courses the *'easiest [way of developing] is actually on the job where you have to complete a task and you learn by actually doing the task, [she thought] that's the easiest'.*

GL 10 also found certain learning interventions to be particularly beneficial which had pushed her out of her comfort zone and, whilst not being enjoyable when actually taking part, where things that one could look back at with pride because of their challenging nature:

I mean there's other courses that I remember, one in particular was a presentation skills course, which was just awful - it was the worst two days of my life - but it was brilliant at the end because I got through it and you could really see a big difference. But that was doing something that really....the way it was done, it wasn't particularly a comfortable course, but at the end of it, everybody had done really well.

Interviewer: So you found going outside your comfort zone a really good way of learning?
Yes. GL 10)

Not surprisingly the two actuaries (GL 5 and 12) in this group drew similar parallels as above in that they appeared to derive a great deal of satisfaction from passing the actuarial exams. These exams were made all the much harder because they had to be negotiated around full time working.

A4.3 Extrinsic Issues and Learning

A4.3.1 Organisation Culture

In this subsection, the manager's views in relation to GL's culture are explored in detail. The most important aspects that each manager communicated about the organisational culture are shown in Table A4.9. As can be seen from this table it is particularly interesting to note that none of the managers from GL were particularly complimentary about the organisational culture that was in place. In effect through their comments each manager found at least one issue on which to criticise the culture and in certain cases managers openly felt that elements within GL inhibited managerial learning.

a) Managers in negative category (organisation culture inhibits learning)

Seven of the managers were placed in this negative category. When the managers were asked to describe the organisational culture as they saw it, one of the main themes that emerged was that there was still too much blaming by certain people. Four managers (GL 8, 9, 10 & 13) specifically mentioned the fact that there was a 'blame culture' in place and for as a result of this there were a number of negative connotations. One of the most persuasive arguments made here was that as a result of this blame culture there could be a decrease in people's willingness to experiment, and be creative if continually there is the potential to be blamed when things went wrong. GL 13 sums up the problems which having such a blame culture may have:

We unfortunately do have what I would call a blame culture. We're all working really hard, under a lot of pressure and when you're working under a lot of pressure, people make mistakes. One of the improvements that we've tried to make ... we've tried to make the turn around so we get policy documents outside the door more quickly...all that sort of thing. So there's a lot more pressure and mistakes are made. Now, OK, you need to know why mistakes are made and if it's just carelessness, you need to say to the person, well don't do it again. But it needs to be much more looked on as, what can we learn from that mistake to prevent it and at the most senior levels of the company, they think they do that, but they don't. They have a very, very blaming culture - they point fingers, they stop people's careers from advancing and it is not healthy. (GL 13)

It was interesting to note that as can be seen from the above statement from GL 13, most of these managers firmly felt that those who held more senior positions in the organisation who were mostly responsible for perpetuating this type of culture. For example GL 8 and 9 whilst feeling that there had been genuine attempts to change the culture but when things went wrong there was tendency to revert to the old culture again:

[The culture is] a bit mixed at the moment. We were trying to put in a culture change to make it much more open, with empowerment and team working and that is working to a certain extent. I think from middle management downwards but I'm not sure that senior management has bought into that and they are still if something goes wrong - 'sack them'. I think there is still a bit of that and a bit of fear being brought in where it was meant to be reduced. (GL10)

Also GL 9 also noted that with so much fear around at the present time there was always likely to be a bit of the blame factor, especially further up the organisation:

I think the culture has got a number of elements to it. I think there's definitely an element of fear because people are concerned for the future and their jobs. Within that fear there's an element of blame because there are a lot of people who try and profess new culture and say, come and tell me if there's problems but that's the same as saying if you come and tell me there's problems, I'll shoot you. So I think there's a lot of concern about the culture from people within the organisation. (GL 9)

GL 9 also felt that another feature of the culture now especially for managers, was erosion of the job for life and continual movement up the organisation. However although he personally did not have a problem with that, he felt there were serious problems for certain managers because the organisation had not communicated that this new deal was in place. Therefore he felt that there were still some people 'playing their hearts out at the wrong game plan ... saying well where's [their] promotion whereas where's [their] job is the new reward for being successful, plus bonuses, plus packages.

For the other managers who were placed in this 'low' category several issues also emerged surrounding the organisation culture of which they were critical. For example GL 2 felt that the organisation was still very political in nature, which made it a very tough environment for managers like herself who was not '*a political beast*'. GL 3 and 7 perceived the culture to be actuary and cost dominated which led to problems where those at the top were poor at understanding that there was a vital role to be performed by non-actuaries. However although this actuarial grip was still in place, GL 7 felt that at more middle management levels there was evidence that more non-actuaries were beginning to become more prevalent.

b) Managers in neutral category (elements of culture undermine learning)

The remaining six managers in GL were placed in this neutral category. The general unifying theme in their comments was that far-reaching change was taking place, which could undoubtedly have an affect on managerial participation in learning and development. However in comparison to the seven managers who were placed in the negative category these managers were pragmatic in relation to the culture that was now in place, however there were elements of regret and concern at some aspects of the culture in GL.

At least four of the managers spoke about the efforts that had been made to reduce costs in GL. Ultimately although these managers felt that this was a positive and necessary step in order to realign the company to its markets. This development led one manager to describe GL as '*awakened ... and] ... now a wolf in sheep's clothing because we're now basically a Plc operating as a mutual*'. For another manager there was a feeling that the company had

achieved its objective and was now certainly more focused, but inevitably there had been some casualties along the way, as he summed up:

Some people have left the organisation as a result of that process, however that was part of the process in order to get our 'lean and mean' I think is the phrase we wanted to use. So we had a clear base point and we could launch some guiding principles about our costs and about how we could control our costs with the growth that we expect to have. (GL 4)

The comments of GL 6 also closely aligned to those above where she described the downsizing exercise:

...700 redundancies or 40 % out of the cost base ... [which had]... turned the place on its head basically and that was a significant change and knocked the culture to hell in here. It was very plodding before and it actually has moved up several gears ... There is actually very few of the people who have been here for a long time still left unless they were people who were good and had the skills and not the ones who were plodding along ... they disappeared in the great scheme of things so there is a significant amount of new blood about the place ... there is a far greater urgency and speed in terms of moving from A to B, there is a higher level of - I don't want to use stress because I don't mean stress - I actually mean...

Interviewer: Stimulation...

Yes exactly, you work at a much higher pace, there is a bigger buzz about what you are doing but you are almost in catch up and you are moving very very fast and there is no lull anymore. There is not much time for reflection these days. (GL 6)

Although the above comments show some of the positive side of the culture as it stands now there was also a view that certain remnants of the old were still in place and these were in the main negative influences. Several managers (GL 1, 5 and 11), talked about the inadequate communication that was in place, like GL 1 who felt that:

We don't communicate to our people particularly well so I'm not sure how many of my colleagues would realise how far the organisation's moved. ... Maybe it's because I've worked with other PLC's that I'm aware of the culture change but I don't think we have communicated the culture change across the organisation. ...the organisation has moved, it still has a way to go yet. (GL 1)

Amongst the other managers there were indications that certain other aspects of the culture were present, which they found to be flawed. For example, GL 6 mentioned that further up the organisation there was '*quite a closed hierarchy ... there is very much a school-tie network which kind of leaves women out of that I would have to say.*' Also GL 12 felt that primarily as a result of the restructuring and downsizing there was a great deal more insecurity present amongst the staff and as a result:

A degree of loyalty has been lost from staff, where people would have supported the company and stuck by the company. I no longer feel that the staff feels that the company will support them. It is clearly up to them and I think that it is clearly the kind of culture that has developed but I'm not so sure whether it has been totally beneficial, it does have downsides as well (GL 12)

These comments clearly typify the feeling of the majority of managers in this cohort, who although recognising the need for change in the company also had some reservations at the same time about what the full implications were.

A4 3 2 Management Development Culture

In this section some of the cultural issues are taken further and discussed more specifically with respect to learning in GL (See Table A4.10).

a) Managers in negative category (MD culture inhibits learning)

The comments made by four managers illustrated that they were negative about the learning and development culture. In the main, the principal theme was the lack of opportunities, support and structure.

A theme that was common in all the informants' comments to some degree was related to the amount of support that was actually present for managers. In their opinions these managers implied that there was an element of *'lip service'* between the rhetoric surrounding training and development within GL and what actually happened in reality. For GL 3 in particular there was a feeling that there was a dual system in operation and ultimately the *'official party line'* as she described it was not reflected in what actually happened in the organisation. She summed up that *'the policy line is that training and development is an essential lubricant for the organisations development - that's the party line'*. She illustrated that in her experience although taking such qualifications as MBAs is encouraged in the end there was a clear bias towards actuarial qualifications and hence MBA qualified managers may find it hard to realise their ambitions regarding further development:

Well Grampian Life didn't know what an MBA was; they were frightened of it. It was taken in 1991 and they were very suspicious of them and didn't give me any credence but that didn't really bother me because I came from a consultancy background where everyone had MBAs. I realised that I wanted a more practical application ... But they don't like MBAs, they want actuarial qualifications, they don't know what to do with the woman who has significant drive, who can achieve things and who has an MBA because I'm sort of a what-do we do-with her type thing. If she'd had an actuarial type qualification, maybe we could have done something with her. (GL 3)

GL 9 also clearly felt that there was a gap between what the company espoused and what was actually happening on the ground, particularly amongst managers who were under pressure to achieve objectives and hence often did not find development a major priority. When GL 9 was asked about this issue of support for managers to participate his reply sums up the situation neatly:

Interviewer: Do you think that training and development participation is not as fully supported?
No I'd say it's not. There is a Grampian Life University - a thing the training manager has been talking about for a number of years - and I think it's yet to manifest itself, so there's supposed to be things, but in reality, they're not there. And they're not accessible. I think Computer Based Training (CBTs) are the most accessible thing, which are taken by members of staff. (GL 9)

The other two managers in this lower category pointed out that certain opportunities were not in place for managers in the organisation. For example when GL1 was asked to

describe the culture in the organisation in terms of MD, he felt that the company could derive a whole range of benefits if secondments were made available within GL:

There's an opportunity there [to improve the MD culture] but I don't think there's anything in the company. The sort of thing I would like to see happening is the encouragement for people to do more qualifications but equally you would be able to exchange with organisations. ... Equally within the organisation, my previous employer had a system whereby people that they wanted to progress in the organisation got to know the organisation inside out. They did this by spending a number of months in different parts of the business we don't do that here and I think there could be benefit in that. (GL 1)

Similarly GL 2 communicated that, particularly for managers, as they move from position to position and further through the grades they seemed to receive little real support and were perhaps just expected to adapt to their new roles without real training and development. Her comments below illustrate this opinion:

I don't think we're very good at developing people from one stage to another in Scottish Widows in that all of a sudden, they're interviewed and they're team manager which is a huge step absolutely huge, and then from a team leader to manager - that is absolutely massive. (GL 2)

b) Managers in neutral category (elements of MD culture undermine learning)

For the four managers in this grouping their comments in the main indicated that the MD culture which was in place was improving to some extent but equally there were still elements that they felt could undermine learning and development. With this in mind when the managers here were asked to describe the culture often they would mention the positive side but when further pressed, other elements would be revealed that would indicate a different picture. The main issue for these managers centred on the perceived level of support they received particularly from their colleagues or direct line manager in relation to learning and development.

GL 8 and 11 for example, whilst seeing some improvement in terms of the provision of training and development for staff, through for example the GL college, and better structures and support for line managers, still had problems in their roles with support and direction. For example, GL 8 after qualifying felt that, *'there was] no chance of getting coaching from her manager so she didn't really have anybody to train [her in the job in situ. [she actually had to rely on her] staff to tell [her] about the actual technical side of the job... she guessed that these are barriers to learning the technical side of the job'*.

The other two managers in this category (GL 10 & 13) again acknowledged the progress that had been made in raising development up the agenda. However they still felt that there was room to improve, and they noted that in reality some of their colleagues needed to change in order to facilitate further improvement in the MD culture. For example GL 10 noted that:

Appendix Four

I think the opportunities are there and it's up to the individuals to take them up. We've changed slightly from saying that we're being developed for our current roles to thinking long term. I think we've got a wee bit to go till we get there but I think that developing people for the outside world is now important. I think there's still the feeling that you have training done to you rather than take the responsibility. GL 1

GL 13 also related two examples where she felt the company had not been supportive to colleagues desiring MBA qualifications. In her view taking such qualifications was a positive step as she pointed out that *'the company has to benefit from someone doing that kind of study'*, however in the end both the employees were frustrated because *'the company wouldn't pay anything'*. Also, GL 13 noted that a perception existed among her colleagues that when one was actually out of the office and taking part in training and development, was a *'perk'*. With this in mind she related that she *'tended not to advertise the fact that she was going to Brussels, she just said she was away on a course and they [colleagues] assume it's London or Bristol or somewhere like that.'*

c) Managers in positive category (MD culture facilitates learning)

For the five managers who were placed in the positive category the general perception was that the culture towards learning was very facilitative and (certainly on a personal level) they had never encountered anything that would stop them in terms of support, structures or available opportunities.

Perhaps the most interesting thing to note is that from the five managers here four were actuaries and one had a very senior role within the organisations IT department and was educated to PhD level. The fact that actuaries do obtain a vast amount of support was not lost on these managers and the response from GL6 was typical when they were asked comment on the culture in relation to MD that existed in GL:

... to date I have never had a problem if the course was required being able to get the resource from the training department to be able to go on it - whether it has been internal or external. I have had a wide range of experience. I have spent time in IT and spent time project managing. I've spent time working with management consultants when we had the re-engineering as well as doing administrative roles in a variety of different areas and doing a technical role like underwriting and sort of effectively actuarial type work as well. I have had a huge amount of experience so I can move around quite easily. I also worked out in the branch network for 3 years as well so I got very close to the sales side when I done that too, but you need that, it is vital and I would say that I am relatively lucky because I have had that range of experience. (GL 6)

However as well as noting the fact that as actuaries they may have a more structured and supportive environment in which to develop, all these managers including GL 4, an IT Customer Services Manager, felt that in general there were good opportunities available for employees. The comments from GL 4 essentially sum up the general view here:

Through our training department we have taken specific initiatives on board like the Learning Centre and the College which are all about encouraging people to go and learn things like IT skills and giving them the knowledge to go and do it but making them available outside of normal working office hours, so saying *the stuff is there for you - loads of books and CBT and feel free to use all of that*. So we are trying to make things available to people so that there are no restrictions. Training courses are formally planned each year although things can crop up as I mentioned before but every person in Grampian Life has got a training programme for the year which sets out what training they are going to get and how they are going to get it. There is personal development and technical development certainly in IT. GL 4)

A4 3 3 Physical Resource Issues

The aim in this section is to attempt to understand whether these managers perceived factors relating to physical resources (time, geographical location, and costs) contributed to the barriers which prevented them from participating in learning and development activities. Table A4.11 illustrates briefly the perspectives, which these managers held, in relation to physical resources issues and learning.

a) Managers in negative category (resource issues inhibit learning)

For two managers in particular the fact that they occupied pressurised positions and the amount of hours that they had to put into the job were felt to negatively impact on their actual and potential participation in learning and development activities. For GL 8, who had recently undertaken a new position within the organisation the effect of having little time appeared to be particularly acute. For example she asserted that she often worked a 10 hour day and that she could not *'remember the last time that [she] didn't have lunch at her desk'*. Also in her interview she admitted that often *'there is more work there than you can do in the day'* and it was hard enough to find the time to actually carry out her most pressing duties, without the added activity of undertaking more development.

The other manager here, GL 10, also provided a series of examples of where the physical pressures of carrying out her work had impacted on the amount of time that she could spare for training and development activity. The most salient illustration is the fact that a number of courses, had been cancelled because of work commitments:

... it is pressure because when you're working fairly hard and there is a course ...I find often you book something up well in advance and by the time it comes, it's just no use so you go for cancellation. ... You really are working very hard and the Board is asking for something, it's that sort of pressure - it's not that there isn't time in the week, because you would fill it in. It's managing other people and other priorities. Nothing else really. GL 10)

Both of these managers also had issues with the fact that often opportunities and activities, which were relevant for them, were not located in Scotland and therefore this made it even more difficult for them. For example GL 10 starkly summed up the situation for her:

Appendix Four

Interviewer: Do you think there are enough relevant opportunities for you in Scotland as a geographical area?
I tend to have to go down to England. I've never been to anything here really

Interviewer: Is that something that would put you off?
Well there's the cost element and that adds to it. I mean you're thinking in terms of another £300 to go to something there so it makes you think a bit more. GL 10

b) Managers in neutral category (certain resource issues undermine learning)

The majority of the informants in GL occupied the middle ground here in relation to the restrictions physical pressures could have on participation. In essence they appeared to be relatively pragmatic about the effects of such pressures, often implying that it came with the territory of being in relatively senior positions in this organisation. However there was also clearly some dissatisfaction and frustration surrounding the impact that it had on their continuing development. For example a common theme amongst all these managers appeared to be the assertion that if time was not such a barrier for them they would certainly be prepared to participate in more activities, as GL 11 sums up:

I think time, in both cases because even courses in the office, you're thinking of having to take two days out to go on a course so is it really worth the effort, because you've got so much work piling on your desk. I would probably do more if I thought I had time for them. GL 11)

A second theme here that three informants (GL 4, 6, 11 & 13) specifically mentioned was that the pressures impacted on them so much to render 'thinking', 'reflective' or 'creative' time a luxury. Clearly a related problem to this, was actually making enough space to follow up on aspects in relation to the learning event:

Interviewer: So you're talking about follow up. Is that something you feel the people who are presenting the course could help you with?

Yes, they could but you have to make the effort yourself. I went on a follow up Dynergy course just before Christmas which was only a day and a half, with no follow up, and they tried to set up something whereby, ... a sort of buddy system...whereby I and one of the other managers would support each other and follow up, and none of us have done it, we just haven't had the time. It's been so hectic. It's in my diary - contact this particular person - and I just feel oh God, I haven't got time to do that this week. GL 13

The final main theme that was mentioned by the managers in this cohort was related to the difficulty that they perceived there to be as a result of the geographical location of certain developmental conferences, seminars, courses or general learning events. For these managers the fact that such courses were often located in England or abroad was at best a 'hassle' and at worst led on manager to feel that 'Scotland was treated as a kind of backwater' GL 4). Essentially it was felt that often these managers had to justify, not only to their managers and the organisation, but also to themselves the real worth of attending expensive events in London or elsewhere.

c) *Managers in positive category (resource issues not a factor for learning)*

Three managers comments illustrated that, although they acknowledged the pressures that were manifest in the current environment at the present time, ultimately they were not a major factor in terms of barriers to learning. For these three informants there was a distinct appreciation that as managers ultimately if they wanted to proceed further, part of their job was to ensure that the pressures of the job did not get in the way of development. The following segment from the interview with GL 3 epitomise this view:

Interviewer: At your level, you talk about the reorganisation in 1996, has there been the emergence of a new deal, a new psychology in contrast of what's expected of mid-career managers now?

Oh it's to perform. Don't expect anything if you don't perform, we need you as managers to achieve your objectives and quite frankly that's fair. It's not appreciated further down the company and that's the message that I'm trying to get through to my people. (GL 3)

As the above quotation shows this manager clearly understood that a 'New Deal' existed for managers. This view was further reinforced in earlier comments where she underlined that it was up to her personally to ensure that time pressures did not impact on her job. For example, she admitted that when she was involved in implementing a major project in 1997 her 'workload increased dramatically' and time did become a problem. However unlike other managers she appeared to feel that it was up to her to manage her time more effectively. When asked if time was the major inhibitor in more learning then she commented that, *'Yes, but then again you could argue that I let it inhibit me'*.

A4.4 Summary and Conclusions

This section summarises the key findings and conclusions in LL in relation to:

- Intrinsic issues
- Extrinsic issues
- Final remarks

A4.4.2 Intrinsic Issues General Themes and Conclusions

Table A4.1 below illustrates the position of each manager in LL in relation to propensity to learn according to each of the intrinsic factors and learning. From the table some interesting conclusions can be drawn regarding intrinsic factors and their affects on learning. Each barrier is now discussed in turn in order to extract the main points of interest from the interviews:

Table A4.1 Intrinsic Factors and Learning for Managers in Grampian Life

Mgr	Perceptual	Emotional	Motivational	Cognitive (General)	Cognitive (Vocational)	Ratings (Total)
GL1	H	H	H	H	H	15
GL2	H	M	H	M	M	12
GL3	H	L	M	M	H	11
GL4	M	H	M	H	M	12
GL5	M	H	M	H	H	13
GL6	H	H	H	H	M	14
GL7	H	M	H	H	M	12
GL8	M	M	M	H	H	12
GL9	M	H	L	M	M	10
GL10	M	M	M	H	H	12
GL11	M	M	M	H	M	11
GL12	M	M	M	H	H	12
GL13	H	M	H	M	M	12
Totals	H=6[46° o] M=7[54° o] L=0[0° o]	H=5[38° o] M=7[54° o] L=1[8° o]	H=5[28° o] M=7[54° o] L=1[8° o]	H=8[61° o] M=4[39° o] L=0[0° o]	H=6[46° o] M=7[54° o] L=0[0° o]	

a) Perceptual

- No managers placed in low propensity indicating more perceived need to continue to participate. All managers illustrating their perceptual need to continue to participate although seven or 54° o felt there were issues, which tempered desire.
- Medium managers – generally older and well qualified (three actuaries included) from sample with families found juggling work and home lives a difficulty, issues with getting motivation to participate in CPD for actuaries even though a requirement.
- Slightly less than half in high category (six or 46° o) – realised need as evidenced from desire for MBA or more informal learning, managers split equally between older and younger but clearly ambitious.

b) Emotional

- Only one manager (8° o) in low category – young and ambitious yet very frustrated by lack of guidance and support for further career development which meant she was insecure in position.
- Majority (54° o) in medium category – showed some misgivings about future in organisation, fact that redundancies had been made, added to uncertainty but appeared to understand the new situation and the fact they were highly qualified (three actuaries, three graduates or post graduates) offered some assurance.
- High managers – tended to be younger and highly qualified and optimistic about future prospects in organisation and relished the opportunity of actively participating in development which could take put them out of their comfort zones.

c) Motivational

- Only one low propensity manager (8%), who was young (35 years old) and had reached managerial level without feeling need to undertake formal qualification (dropped out of ACII) – hence saw little rewards in (formal) development at this stage (had exceeded expectations).
- Majority (seven or 54%) from all age groups and departments in medium category motivation knocked because of lack of guidance, busy schedules which meant one had to be very motivated to take part in development activities.
- Good proportion (five or 38%) in high group - three of whom were younger (35-38 years) and considering MBAs, but two older (48 and 50 years) motivated to participate in informal opportunities wherever possible.

d) Cognitive

- No managers communicated very negative experiences of either compulsory to third level educational or more vocational learning.
- Majority (69%) very positive formal educational experience (for example, in sample total - five actuaries, one CA, one PhD)
- Four managers or (31%) had certain issues with compulsory or third level education including the often-theoretical learning, but ultimately these bad experiences turned to good ones later in career.
- Main issue for majority (54%) in medium category relating to vocational was correspondence courses – made difficult by lack of close support and would need to consider that route if to learn formally again, good and bad elements to consider about other experiences
- High managers (46%) in relation to vocational learning experiences – particularly enjoyed interactive and practical courses, which challenged assumptions and moved them from their comfort zones.

A4.4.3 Extrinsic Issues: General Themes and Conclusions

Table A4.2 illustrates the aggregate findings relating to the extrinsic factors influencing participation in learning. This table enables some interesting conclusions to be drawn regarding extrinsic factors and their influence on learning in for the managers interviewed in GL. Each barrier is now discussed in turn in order to extract the main points of interest from the interviews:

Table A4. 2 - Extrinsic Factors and Learning for Managers in Central Life

Mgr	Organisational Culture	MD Culture	Physical Resources	Ratings Total
GL1			+	6
GL2				4
GL3		-	+	5
GL4	\	+	\	7
GL5	\	+	\	7
GL6	\	+	\	7
GL7	-	+	\	6
GL8		\	-	4
GL9	-	-	\	4
GL10	-	\	-	4
GL11	\	\	\	6
GL12	\	+	+	8
GL13	-	\	\	5
Totals	+ =0[0° o] \ =6[46° o] - =7[54° o]	+ =5[38° o] \ =4[31° o] - =4[31° o]	+ =3[23° o] \ =8[62° o] - =2[15° o]	

a) Organisational Culture

- No managers were particularly positive about the culture in same way, as some managers in other organisations were – radically different from views on intrinsic issues.
- Majority (54° o) was negative about culture because ‘blaming’ still a major feature – repercussions for creativity because of fear of experimenting. Managers were representative of the departments in GL indicating that such political and blaming behaviour was manifest throughout the organisation.
- Neutral (46° o) – costs main factor in culture now because now central message is to be cost effective impact of development (good use of expenses), also poor communication from senior managers about realities of GL now after culture change.

Appendix Four

a) MD Culture

- More upbeat about culture regarding development and learning (38% or five managers more satisfied because had received substantial opportunities, but realised as highly educated – four actuaries, 1 PhD – they got best of training and development.
- Still significant minority (31%) negative about culture because of mismatch between rhetoric ‘policy line’ of senior managers and reality – learning culture not embedded, not enough support for learning (especially non-actuaries, but still well qualified with MBA and ACII qualifications) felt by mostly young managers.
- Neutral (31%) – MD culture improving in terms of support and structures but certain individuals (colleagues and senior managers) do not facilitate learning through attitudes.

b) Physical Resources

- Only two managers (15%) very negative about the effects of having limited resources to participate – two managers in very pressurised senior roles reporting to Board and worried about participating because it meant in effect that more work would be stored up for later.
- Majority (62% or eight managers more neutral) – recognised the constraints in the environment but some general acceptance that time was a problem for all these days should be more proactive.
- Small number (3 managers or 23%) more positive – very reluctant to connect non-participation with time or cost constraints because understood perfectly need to take more responsibility (younger and more pragmatic).

A4.4.4 Final remarks

It was interesting to note that two managers in particular emerged from the research in GL as having a high aggregate propensity to participate in learning activities in relation to all the intrinsic issues. These two (GL 1 & GL 6) were young in terms of the sample at 38 and 35 years respectively. It was also interesting to note that both communicated that they were seriously interested in undertaking an MBA, even though they were well qualified already, especially GL 6 who was an actuary.

However it is interesting to note that in more general terms in GL more than other organisations for the managers to be more positive, proactive and motivated in terms of learning and development. But as well as those who were positive consistently in terms of the intrinsic issues there were also a significant number who were consistently in the

medium categories. In their interviews these managers tended to, as well as outlining positive aspects (eg. their motivation), also noted that there were constraints. A particularly important one, which arose on a number of occasions, was in relation to support and guidance for career development.

With the above in mind perhaps it is not so surprising that on the whole these managers appeared to be more negative about extrinsic issues (culture and MD culture especially) than those in other organisations. For example, four managers (GL 2, 8, 9, 10) only scored four in the aggregate rating on extrinsic issues out of a maximum of nine. These managers, who did not conform to any particular patterns in terms of age, qualifications (two professional and two higher) were all negative about the culture in GL and how it had changed throughout their (long careers) at GL. Perhaps one of the most important feature of GL however was in relation to the MD culture. It was clear that some managers felt that there was a clear bias towards actuaries to the detriment of other professionals, and for a number of managers this appeared to be a major barriers to learning.

Table A4.3 Grampian Life Manager Profiles

	GL 1	GL 2	GL 3	GL 4	GL 5	GL 6	GL 7
Age	38	48	35	47	44	35	38
Sex	M	F	F	M	M	F	M
Marital status	Married	Married	Married	Divorced	Married	Single	Married
Spouse	Research Analyst	Actuary – made redundant by GL	University lecturer	NA	Graphic Designer	NA	Primary school teacher
Quals.	ACII	Highers and Diplomas	MBA	PhD	Actuary	Actuary	Actuary
Children	2	2	No	1	1	NA	F Manual worker M Housewife
Age/School Stage of children	12, 1	18, 19	No	University	6	NA	2
Parents occupation	F – MD French Insurance Co. M – Housewife	F Milkman M Librarian	Self employed	F – Civil Engineer M – Librarian	F – Education administrator M – Teacher	F – Mechanical Engineer M – Housewife	8, 5
Org title	Developmental Manager	New Business Underwriting Manager	Clients Services Manager	IT Customer Services Manager	Client Services Manager	Customer Services Manager	Compensation and Benefits Manager
Career history	Commercial Union – GL – for last 10 years	GL all career	PA Consulting Group	Various – Spain etc.	GL – all career	GL – all career	GL All career
Distance from office	32 miles away - drive	20 mins walk	15 miles – 25 30 mins drive	1.5 miles	5 miles – 25 mins drive	5 mins drive	2 miles 5 or 10 mins drive
Hobbies and Pastimes	Walking	Just joined gym	Knitting and cooking	Football, Tennis, Travel and Clothes	Golf – used to do hillwalking	Bridge	Sport, rug y, football

	GL 8	GL 9	GL 10	GL 11	GL 12	GL 13
Age	48	35	40	39	43	50
Sex	F	M	F	M	M	F
Marital status	Divorced but living with partner	Married	Married	Married	Married	Divorced
Spouse	Computer Manager	Civil Servant	Chartered Surveyor	Physiotherapist	Housewife	NA
Quals.	Post grad diploma in Bus Studies	Highers	ACII	Actuary	Actuary	Associate member of British Computer Society
Children	No	No	No	3	1	
Age/School Stage of children	No	No	NA	P6, p4, p2	8	
Parents occupation	F – Doctor M – Artist	Both retired bankers	F – Dentist M – Speech therapist	F – Civil Servant M – Legal Secretary	F – Steelworker M – Housewife	F – pathologist Army M - Housewife
Org title	Head Office Compliance Manager	Joint Venture Relationship Manager	Group Management Reporting Manager	Pensions Strategy Manager	Actuanaal Manager	Project Audit Manager
Career history	IBM, Lived abroad, various GL roles	GL all career	14 years at GL	GL – all career	Eagle Star briefly (8 mths) – rest GL all career	7 years with GL. Also worked for other Life, Medical, General Insurance or Consultancy. Started as programmer
Distance from office	15 miles	3 miles	5 miles - car	3 Miles	15 mins drive	16 miles away
Hobbies and pastimes	Skung, tennis, eating out, aerobics	Hillwalking	Swimming, walking and gardening	Church Elder, Chess and children	Squash, Hockey, Wine, Swimming	Garden, cat, golf, travel, skung.

Tables A4.4-A4.11 – Grampian Life Tables Illustrating Evidence from Informants

Table A4.4 Perceptual issues and Prospects for Participation in Learning amongst GL Informants

	Low	Medium	High
GL1			Sees the need to continue to develop is current in the middle of studying for the advanced FPC qualification. Feels intends and has investigated doing the MBA at Edinburgh. [1, 3]
GL2			Realised that there was need for development in certain areas primarily related to managing and dealing with new bosses and finding herself in confrontation course to get better from director reports. [2, 3]
GL3			Perceives there to be a need to continue to develop but very much practically orientated. Feels she needs more development in important way of self development not formal courses as delivered through training department. [4, 9, 10, 18, 7]
GL4		Sullen is motivated and feels that there is need to develop in career but is constrained to some extent by the present environment. [20, 51]	
GL5		Really needs to learn things on a need to know basis where you can actually come back and put the things into practice. No point in coming back with course 'trophy' of handbooks that are never touched again. Cause of time constraints. [7]	
GL6			Contemplating doing an MBA and has career investigated correspondence course route. [8] However there are also ambition questions to address here – knows that she does not want to get promoted much further because will lose contact with the staff.
GL7			Investigating doing an MBA – has a career view about what that will entail and what the best way to go about it is doesn't want to do just for the sake of it. [3] Sees the need for development and developing a longer term focus and direction.
GL8		Moved to new role has had to take on new learning. Really this perspective sums up perceptual need to learn for job then it must be done. No real long term view on career – but often wonders if this new role is right for her. [1, 19, 40, 43]	
GL9		Would like to incorporate further study and qualification but there are the problems associated to pressure of work, so hence has not been overly proactive in searching. [15, 16]	
GL10		Sometimes has the view when attending certain courses of 'I know that', so sometimes hard to get enthusiastic for it and really see needs. Searching for something else – going on something shortly that will hopefully help. [22]	
GL11		Thought about an MBA but really feels that there are problems in terms of family and work commitments. Has had problems in the past of taking too long to do the actual course because he was not disciplined enough. [3, 5, 6]	
GL12		Participation mostly connected to work and ultimately needs at that time – has to keep up to date as part of actual continuing development. [9]	
GL13			Sees the need to continually update and follow up on anything that has been done in the past – does not think in a been there, done that way. Feels there will always be a new angle on any subject. [25]

Table A4.5 Emotional factors and prospects for participation in learning amongst GL Informants

	Low	Medium	High
GL1			Recognises that there are changes happening in the organisation and not really certain about what the best direction for him is now. Believes that options are open – so therefore nothing really affecting potential participation from emotional angle [26]
GL2		A lot of information in interview - manager shows that there are some emotional factors, including shyness, not being a 'political beast' and not wanting to be exposed. But interesting thing is that some of these appear to have been a spur to further development for her to attempt to remedy some of the negative effects. [3,5,7,15,19]	
GL3	A young manager who wants to make it to the top of the organisation. The main emotional factor here is that she feels she is not being directed well enough and she wishes there was more direction for her personally so she could keep her career moving in the right direction, but is tempted to change direction due to lack of guidance [23, 46, 59]		
GL4			Likes to be given the opportunity to come out of his comfort zone for learning activities [30]
GL5			Never really thought much about career direction or longer term development - no really a priority [19,20]. Recognises that job in the industry are less secure and you have to perform more now but again no major worries in relation to this because has worked through the really traumatic times [28]
GL6			No real emotional factors of any significance here. Very analytical in her outlook and therefore will want to undertake anything going. [19] e.g., Outward Bound even though unfit. No fears for the future - new culture, which is more experimental and exciting opportunities available [54]
GL7		Some emotional factors in the past but again through development courses etc. feels he has gone some way towards addressing these and becoming more confident in own ability. Also related to this was moving out of actual comfort zone towards HR [14,15]. As regards the future there would appear to be some concerns about security in place - as a result of technological changes - even actual work could be threatened and skills marginalised. [24]	
GL8		Some emotional factors related to changing of area - wondering if the right decision has been made for the future [19]	
GL9			Lake GL6 in outlook - quite positive - accepts that there have been changes and feels that he is well enough placed to handle those. Also feels he has surpassed where he felt he would get to in the organisation - so any more movement is a bonus [27]
GL10		Some worries and fears about what may be in store in the future when current project ends. Quite willing to think about development then but could benefit from some aspect of guidance with the future career direction. [29,30]	

GL11		<p>Carer has went fairly well to plan, but does have some trepidation about his future direction and what will happen in his career – if he will stay at GL or leave. Some degree of insecurity around after the also redundancy exercise – no-one really feels that secure anymore [31]</p>	
GL12		<p>More insecurity around at present and that has downsides – in terms of staff loyalty, but they are realising more that you have to make the best of your skills and take opportunities that are on offer. No marked effect on his learning and development though, except for the time issue [21,31]</p>	
GL13		<p>Not really any problems in moving out-with comfort zone even though may have to think about it 'when the crunch came' – if had to do presentations etc [33]</p>	

Table A4.6 Motivational factors and prospects for participation in learning amongst GL Informants

	Low	Medium	High
GL1			Highly motivated manager about to embark upon an MBA recognises that he needs the discipline of a physical P T course to complete correspondence not the best for him [4,5]
GL2			Illustrates a real desire to continue to learn and improve as a manager
GL3		Motivated, but there is a realisation that sometimes that motivation can be 'kicked out of you' because there is a problem in the organisation about the actual direction that is given about her career – which she really wants to get. But there is no danger of her becoming complacent either. [70]	
GL4		Issues surrounding getting enough motivation to go further in your career and what can actually be achieved [9]. Illustrated in view on development courses – a particular issue is getting enough motivation to travel to conferences etc – Often there is a misconception that it is glamorous but not in the end. [25]	
GL5		Has been shown to be relatively motivated to keep on developing but not so much so in relation to more formal activities, because there is a tendency to 'avoid any further exams'. [1]	
GL6			If there is a motivation issue it might be tempered by the experience that she had of correspondence courses in the past where there was too much isolation and you had to be very motivated to actually get on with the course while working and studying [6]
GL7			Similar to GL1 in that he is looking into doing an MBA, but different in the respect that he is looking for distance or internet based learning [3] Also has issues that really suggest that he has been held back by not having a specific goal in the past [10]
GL8		Motivation is sometimes constrained by the problems that arise in the actual subject that you work in – compliance being 'fairly dry' by nature. Therefore there is a need for more self motivation to research it and develop further in relation to it [24]	
GL9	Has had motivational problem in relation to rewards available Best example - ACII exams, which were never finished because, did not see the career progression that would result from it [3,49] Also as pointed out in emotional section quite happy with position attained to date		
GL10		Manager who appears to be motivated to continue onwards and is aware of the need, but really motivation would seem to be constrained to an extent by the time issue. She would have to think about more flexible forms of learning if anything was to be done and also it would need to be much more practically orientated [8,16,22]	
GL11		Admits that should be more of a self starter and this is further illustrated in comments which illustrate that he is not that aware of enough opportunities - does not bother with mailing lists etc [17,20]	
GL12		Motivated manager and realistic about the need to continue developing, but in effect constrained by the effects of both work and family. [17,20,21]	
GL13			Motivated manager where there does not appear to be anything holding her back from participation Important to keep developing and appears to be participating in various courses and has plans for others [18,19,25]

Table A4.7 Cognitive issues and prospects for participation in learning amongst GL Informants (General)

	Low	Medium	High
GL1			Only real issue here was deciding not to complete business studies course in Glasgow College – however as is shown – does not appear to have negatively affected the manager – completed FPC and plans for further development [1]
GL2		Has some regrets about not going to university and there is a sense that this has almost given her an inadequacy complex when faced with other managers who are actuaries. However she appears to be pleased with the fact that she now occupies a position that in the past only an actuary would get to [1,15]	
GL3		Very poor experience of the undergraduate course – ‘hated’ almost everything about it – culture, aloofness and detachment from reality. However very different from the part time MBA course which was ‘loved’. [2,4,8]	
GL4			Varied formal education experience – school was ok, worked for a while before going to university – felt he did not learn much from computer science degree course but there were ‘effective’ aspects relating to discipline which he has taken from undertaking an PhD. [1,2, 30]
GL5			Typical actuary type background – very successful school and university career with no negative aspects mentioned. Actuarial recognised as being hard but passed while at work influenced decision in as much as appeared to have had enough of exams by then, but still other activities undertaken since [1]
GL6			As with GL5 – typically very successful formal educational career leaving school for university in 5 th year and completing actuarial exams in 4 years through correspondence course – similar issues as all actuaries interviewed [1,2,3,4]
GL7			University and actuarial exams – more issues than other actuaries interviewed
GL8			Varied issues – going through natural route from school to university was just accepted really – from middle class background (father a doctor) – was going to go to go into medicine – sometimes wonders about choice [2,4,5,8]
GL9		Fairly neutral experience – school, did not go to university and does not feel that has negatively affected him. Really just ‘fell into life assurance’, and did try some ACII exams but did not complete – (see next for details) [1,2,3]	
GL10			Normal progression again – no real issues with formal compulsory education, more in connection to the CA [1,2,3]
GL11			Positive experience of the formal education – appeared to come naturally from school to Cambridge to actuarial qualification [1]
GL12			Positive view of formal education where felt university suited his style of learning much better than A levels for example because there was a chance for more focus [3]
GL13		Only real issue here is that she feels that with the benefit of hindsight may have chosen subjects and direction differently, but not much to say anything positive or negative about experience of compulsory or university education [1,2,3]	

Table A4.8 Cognitive issues and prospects for participation in learning amongst GL Informants (Vocational Activities)

	Low	Medium	High
GL1			Positive experiences of work related learning and nothing has appeared to do courage any further participation. Is clear for the need for the actual discipline of a course (MBA) to actually get the best out of him. [5,6,7]
GL2		Some problems with the Sundridge Park managerial course and other out of house ones that she went on when she first got promoted to managerial grade, where she feels that she was never actually trained 'to be a manager' for example in terms of budgets etc.	
GL3			Really enjoyed the whole experience of the MBA course that she did – a lot different from the undergraduate course, which appeared to be to theory laden for her. Has affected her. In so much that she now knows that for here there is a real need for interaction from peers and also any development needs to be practical [4,5,9]
GL4		Has had some negative experiences in the past where there have been too much passivity in the learning event – where you sat all day listening. Has affected decision in so much that he now knows what he wants from learning events – more participative and going out of comfort zone [30]	
GL5			Generally positive experience on all the courses he has attended (at least half a dozen major ones) while working here – found them personally challenging and insightful. Outlined his genuine reasons for undertaking such courses clearly [2,3,4,5]
GL6		Found the correspondence course particularly difficult from a motivation point of view – had to be dedicated, found that when a more informal tutorial system was set up she thrived on it. This has taught lessons about the way she wants to learn in the future. [7,12]	
GL7		Mixed experiences of courses from traumatic actual exams to other courses where content has been poor. Really the thing he has found from all of this is that the more participative the course is the better for him that forces you out of your comfort zone [1-6]	
GL8			Relatively positive about work related learning that she has been involved in the past if affected decisions – really learning she would desire now need to be directly related to the job at hand so that actually learning on the job is best way of moving forward [21,22]
GL9		Dropped out of the formal ACII courses, which he felt were delivered very poorly by academic institution with poor lecturers and unexciting 'correspondence courses' – felt to be irrelevant to him [7] However had a very good experience of the 'dynergy' course – eventually made a speech on its merits [9,10]	
GL10			Found that block release for the CA exams was good for her, better than the part time course route. Also has been in other courses that have been challenging but very rewarding after completion – e.g. presentation courses [25]
GL11		Slightly negative about the correspondence course of study taken for actuarial qualification – felt that it encouraged him to be lazy because he was away from the discipline of the full time course. But could see the reason for it, to allow for more flexible study, although for him even this flexible study would be difficult now because of family commitments. [3,5]	
GL12			Got through the actuarial exams but found them a good deal harder than at university because there were 'no right or wrong answers', which was a change for him. Not really affected or tempered his enthusiasm for further work related or CPD type learning related to actuarial issues. [7,9,10]
GL13		Has enjoyed most of the courses she has participated in relation to work, but finds that there is so much that has to be done when she comes back it tempers her desire to go sometimes. [4,5,6]	

Table A4.9 Organisational cultural issues (Culture of organisation and industry): Impact on learning in GL

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
GL1		Neutral about the way company has moved to embrace change now getting more focused on the future needs. Describes it as a 'wolf in sheep's clothing, still mutual but increasingly acting like a plc. Downside is failure to communicate to certain employees repercussions of change [41-44]	
GL2	Describes 'kindergrarten' type culture, but getting slightly better – yet did give other examples of how it is a very political culture in GL where there is conflict between managers and departments [51-52,53]		
GL3	Actual side still ingrained in culture. Personally there are problems - the organisation does not really know what to do with her. She feels that the culture really has to change somewhat to actually 'permeate current policy' [73,74]		
GL4		Big culture change undertaken with the aim of getting GL 'lean and mean'. A positive step but still there have been some negative factors for other people in the company because if the trauma of down sizing [47] Other factors mentioned here is that it does get political the further up you move in the organisation [7].	
GL5		A lot of change taken place in the organisation - cost reduction and expectations on managers people now know that performance is everything and the secure job until 65 is not here anymore. An aspect, which has to go further though, is communication – although better than the past – still needs to improve [27,28]	
GL6		Re-engineering and cost reduction exercise which 'knocked culture to hell' and moved it up several gears from 'plodding' to more commercial, youthful and buzzing culture [49,50,51]. Downside - still the old school be network further up, still some layers of people left over whom are very resistant to change [38]	
GL7	Culture changed more controls from actual and finance real grip on the finance of company. However at the same time he feels the company still has the 'vneer of support' in that it is still paternal. Also less actuals in middle management positions indicates a change from past [26-28]. Therefore there are inconsistencies still things to be done to improve culture.		
GL8	Feels that the culture is mixed at the moment attempts to change from top but only been sporadic uptake. Still some elements of the blame culture present in effect the more senior management have not bought into it and revert back to blaming sometimes – have to be able to let people make mistakes. [51,52]		
GL9	Culture is changing on a number of fronts – in many ways it is more focussed and objective but really there are a lot of problems too. Fear around and thus ultimately can lead to blame arising out of that so there is concern for many in the company. Also lateral moves are the only option now in the firm, but they have not told people that so people are getting frustrated. [40,41,51]		
GL10	Still a blame culture in place in the organisation which will take a while to get rid of. Also positive sides there as well in pockets – problem is that the organisation is large and therefore there are subcultures in place [37-38]		

GL11		On the whole feels that people are probably happier now in the company than they were three or four years ago, but it is still very much dominated by top management and also by the cost controllers, although communication is improving too. [32]	
GL12		Culture has changed and in many respects that has been good – more people developing and more encouragement, but yet there is less patience and less security and therefore there is definitely less loyalty amongst the staff who have become much more individualistic [30,31]	
GL13	Negative about the fact that there is still a b ame culture in place in the organisation and this can really affect how people do things – leading to less experimentation and creativity Ultimately management can stop a person's career if they keep 'pounding fing rs' which is very unhealthy [43].		

Table A4.10 MD Culture issues (Opportunities learning climate in organisation): Impact on Learning in GL

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
GL1	Organisation could benefit from more secondments around the company so everyone knows the business better [45]. Not enough provision in organisation could do more than the appraisal (P&S) system to help the individual [17]. Not really many colleagues embarking on much in way of development and does not think there is a clear policy on support [27]		
GL2	Feels that GL is not very good at developing people from team leader to manager levels where there is an amazing change in skills requirements and people should get more support for that change [33]. Has never been particularly empowered in her career or had any training on mentoring even though she is expected to do some [16,29,30,31]		
GL3	Difference between what is the official party line in relation to training and development in GL. This manager would appear to think that often there is not enough support from both her boss and the organisation as a whole [23,25,62,73]. Also has a specific problem with the training department because she feels that they will literally not have the right kind of courses or opportunities for her [18]. Pressured because she needs to be seen directing, if any learning is to take place [46].		
GL4			Very positive about the culture of the company with relation to MD and learning – feels that through the learning centre and the ‘college’ there is good provision and opportunities for people to and learn about anything related to the business [49,50]
GL5			Upbeat about the MD and learning culture in place feels that there are plenty of opportunities and employees are making the most of anything that comes up [30]
GL6			Manager who on the whole is very positive towards the MD culture of the organisation and has never had a problem with getting enough opportunities. However does note that as an actuary she is very fortunate in that there is a deliberate policy to rotate them around the office [62,68]
GL7			Generally positive about the opportunities and support as well as the structure that is present for MD in the organisation. In whatever department he has worked within there has been a great deal of support and desire from managers. But like GL6 he is an actuary and realises that maybe that for others ‘aspiring managers’ there maybe a problem in getting enough. [29]
GL8		Generally neutral about the culture in that she feels the training and development department do a good job and provide sufficient opportunities. Where she might have problems is related to fact that she feels that she cannot really go to her new boss for coaching so therefore feels reliant on her staff to a certain degree [23, 53,56]	
GL9	Negative and sceptical about the training and development culture that is in place. Recognises that there has been a serious attempt to change things. But an element of ‘lip service’ coming through. Although he does admit that they have been extremely clear on a number of initiatives, but on other issues he has questions – training and development is main one [17,44,45]		

GL10		<p>General improvement in the culture of MD as far as this manager can see - more support, opportunities and structures</p> <p>But the biggest problem is breaking the mindset that training is something that you 'get done to you' instead of it being your responsibility to take opportunities etc [40] Also needs to be more thought put into the succession planning that the company offers [41]</p>	
GL11		<p>Really the emphasis is that it is very much up to you to continue to develop yourself. Feels that there is a purposeful attempt to improve the structures and support for line management in particular, his experience in the past was poor really because of the lack of support from his manager. [14]</p>	
GL12			<p>Again emphasis on you to be more proactive in terms of develop activity. Believes that in general this has been taken up by most managers who will see it as a good thing to continue to develop their staff [37]</p>
GL13		<p>A problem in that some colleagues may not be as supportive as they should be - see training and development as more of a perk than what it is. But really she sees the culture for MD improving in the main in terms of support and structures - does have one negative example where the company would not pay for a colleague to do an MBA - isolated case? [45,48]</p>	

Table A4.11 Physical Resource Issues (Time, place, and costs): Impact on Learning in GL

	Low	Medium	High
GL1			Generally accepting of the fact that there are lot of physical pressures in pace at the present time but again there is a pragmatism that this is the way it is and therefore a manager part of one job is to be an active [4,13,18,23]
GL2		The physical pressures are a problem and obvious that this manager also works long hours, but again fairly pragmatic about it all even though she does admit that it does impact on her learning and ultimately her performance [2] One issue that is quite clear is that she finds travel to conferences and seminars a hassle – recognises this as a potential weakness [35,37]	
GL3			Long hours worked and realise that physical time pressures are a problem but again fairly pragmatic and is that it is fair for company to be so demanding the day 20, 53 In terms of locations feels there are probably in not enough opportunities available for her but not too bothered would travel to go for something that was felt to be important [3]
GL4		Recognition for real need to put in long hours these days and reflects what other managers have said that no one gets away with 9.5pm anymore The main constraining thing about these types of hours is that there is a certainly a problem occasionally with creativity and also in relation to training and development there are sets of priorities and sometimes training comes off second [8,9] Also has a big problem with the way that courses that are relevant to him are allocated – sometimes feels that 'Scotland is like a backwater'. [25]	
GL5		Time issues has influenced participation because often there have been courses where you come back with handbooks and course materials which are put in cupboards and never looked at again. Therefore there is a need for short sharp learning experiences which can be used when you get back. [7]	
GL6		Similar to other managers here when she talks about the commitment that has to be made in the short term to make longer term gains when learning is considered [16,51,52]. 'It is easy to take the short term view but, must not do that' [53] But finds backlog on return after being away on a two-day course. Also the fact that there is as a consequence of time pressures very little time for actual reflection these days. Also recognises that there probably is not enough provision in Scotland – where IMS is only real provision [36]	
GL7		Almost exactly the same comments from this manager as GL6, where it is understood that you should not cancel, but there is a tremendous temptation to do so when you know the work will be building up at home [33] Also wishes there could be more provision 'breakfast sessions' which are really useful in Edinburgh – going to London for that is hard to justify – so it is a definite consideration for learning, as well as costs involved [16]	
GL8	Not enough time to do the research for her job at present never mind anything developmental 'can't remember last time lunch was away from desk', also budgetary problems do arise as well 29,45,55,60,63 Fact that there is virtually nothing relevant in Scotland does not help her training, managers here could probably run better courses on the compliance area anyway! [33]		

GL9		Has really been the main factor in preventing any more learning being incorporated into this managers career – simply have to be here x number of hours a day and there is no way you can take off – must be filling business objectives [15] See it impacting on other things – for example appraisals where managers do not have the time to do a well prepared interview [33, 46, 49, 50, 51]	
GL10	Example given of courses being booked up well in advance having to be cancelled because of demands and pressures sprang on you by the Board or other managers. Really an illustration of what comes first for all of these managers, but as she goes onto point out that this is really just a fact of life in all other professions – certainly was in the CA firm that she worked in [16, 21, 34, 35] Fact that this manager has never been to anything developmental in Scotland illustrates the location of most learning events of relevance to her – England [27]		
GL11		Makes the point ‘probably do more if had the time’, but with work piling up on the desk it is very hard to go in the first place. Another major element is that because of time pressures there is little time to put elements learnt into practice [8, 9, 12]. Also the budgetary pressures are a factor that always have to be borne in mind now – would appear to be the case that managers have to extremely careful with their budgets these days [28]	
GL12			Time is a problem, but for this manager there is more pragmatic approach where he feels you have to be selective about what you read and what you participate in – really have to think about what is going to help you in the job – key for – c – es – her [21]
GL13		Makes the point that often the good intentions when you return ‘go out the window’ [5] and therefore you wonder about the usefulness of going to the course in the first place. However this manager is still very keen on continuing to learn and really thinks that you have to find a way of getting over it – even though it is pressurising and difficult [6, 7, 19] Although loves travelling and the fact there are fewer events in Scotland is difficult – does not really put her off going even though it does involve extra time. [20, 50]	

APPENDIX FIVE

Borders Life

Founded in the early part of the 19th Century, Borders Life has grown to be one of the UK's largest Pensions and Investment companies, with over one million policyholders. The company employed over 2500 at the time of the interview with the Training & Development Manager (T&D Manager). Crucial to the success of the company is the fact that the distribution channels are realised solely through Independent Financial Advisers, thus ensuring a consistent level of service.

Having traditionally been based in the heart of Edinburgh, the company recently moved to an out of-town location with purpose built headquarters. The most important recent changes include the demutualisation of the organisation the merger with an overseas based Financial Services Conglomerate (FSC). This was considered essential for the company to be able compete on both the national and global stage. The group, at the time of data collection, was considered to be one of the largest listed insurers in the world, with assets of over £175 billion. The T&D Manager communicated at that time, there were around 2500 employees, which were divided roughly between 2000 in the Head Office in Edinburgh and 500 in 32 other offices in the UK.

In contrast with other large life assurers, Borders Life focused its strategy on continuing to develop and improve existing traditional life assurance products as opposed to diversifying into other products and markets. Through this concentration of activity, the company has continued to grow and has established itself as a key contributor to the FSC.

A5.1 Organisational Context

In an interview with the Training and Development Manager (T&D Manager), questions on a number of issues were posed to gain an insight into the organisational context. The following paragraphs summarise the key points of this interview. However more detailed information on the company context is contained in Appendix Seven.

- Most important event in recent history was the take over by a foreign Financial Services Conglomerate (FSC).
- Strategy focused on life assurance and retirement planning products distributed solely through Independent Financial Advisors.

- Innovative and comprehensive communication process in place, all decisions made at Executive level are filtered down the hierarchy – main mechanism is the monthly departmental meetings.
- Organisation culture described as being ‘informal yet focused’ – strategies to use single channel distribution and essentially niche products.
- Very training and development oriented – evidenced by one in four managers (at time of interview with T&D Manager) undertaking studying for qualifications and continued commitment to IiP. Weakness in terms of T&D - variable guidance for staff about best development activities.
- Linked to above – fact that comprehensive competency framework not yet in place to direct managers and staff towards most suitable development opportunities.
- Individual had the ultimate responsibility to ensure development took place, but line managers and T&D department also had a responsibility.
- Performance management based on the annual appraisal – salary calculated on achievement of objectives, passing an examination could be an example but ultimately no actual tangible rewards based solely on passing exams (only one element in list of objectives)

A5.2 Intrinsic issues and learning

A5.2.1 Perceived need for participation - Perceptual

Table A5.4 shows the findings relating to perceptual issues and participation in learning activities for the nine mid career managers in BL.

a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

Two managers were placed in this low category indicating a relatively low likelihood of further participation. The main flavour in their comments indicated that both these managers were fairly complacent with their current roles. For example, when asked about how he saw his career moving in the future, BL 2, showed in his response he was not particularly ambitious and had no real worries about his security as he felt he had readily transferable skills, and a fairly interesting job. Therefore learning and development did not appear be uppermost on his mind:

MM. How do you see your career developing?

I think it's very difficult to predict. What I do know is that I'm quite happy being where I am, but with actuarial work, it's relatively easy for me to go to another office or in another area within Borden Ladlow Gery & Partners. But at this stage, I'm not thinking about it... I really don't know what's going to happen. There are various tiers: General Manager, Chief Executive and Executive Team of 6 or 7, then there's a group of 50 in a Senior Management Team, so basically I'm within that. There's people higher and people lower and it's a bit of a broad structure... I can't see myself getting from senior manager up to executive level. It's a big jump and I don't think I necessarily have all the skills you need. I think you have to be very skilful and very ambitious and I think I can see a couple of people who are likely to get there in a few years time. I am quite happy in the senior management band... (BL 2)

Another clear illustration of BL 2's relatively low perceived need to undertake further development activities, was his noting that in the actuarial area where he worked, he did not have to participate in certain developmental courses that others were required to take part in:

Interviewer: Have you noticed other people taking up opportunities at your level?

There are some areas where you really do need them, e.g. marketing people really do need to go on some things for details and discuss legislation and how it's going to affect markets. You can see that's a requirement for them and it's right for them to do that because they need it for their job... I'm very pleased I don't have to and I would imagine it would cost a lot of money to go on some of these ones. (BL 2)

The second manager (BL 7) appeared to have similar issues as BL 2. The implications of his responses were that he was relatively complacent and even slightly apathetic towards learning, because he felt he received enough development throughout the day. Hence the idea of doing anything more outside of work was not appealing:

Interviewer: What would you say are the main factors that have inhibited your participation in learning activities?

When you are in your 30s or 40s and you've also got a family growing up, there's time to spend with them and of course there's time in the office and typically Information Systems has never been a 9-5 job. I've never regarded it that way, so I suppose it's just time to actually do all the things. If I had really wanted to do something then, yes, I could have made extra time to do that but I've never found it a priority to move ahead... There are lots of courses now set up for computer people, computing in general, education and training in all sorts of things. But I've never really been pulled towards that because I'm doing it all day, every day anyway, so it's not something that I feel I need to go out and do at night. (BL 7)

b) Managers in medium category (some prospects of participation)

The majority (six) of the interviewed managers in BL were placed in this medium category in relation to perceptual barriers to learning. Their comments illustrated those factors, normally connected to their private and busy work lives, or lack of knowledge or direction at this mid stage in their careers, tempered their desire for further learning. The first theme that was apparent for three of the managers (BL 1, 3 & 5) was related to uncertainty about how to proceed. Although all three recognised the need to continue to develop, for individual reasons they appeared unsure of the direction:

Appendix Five

I think another barrier to learning is my perception of my need for learning, I have been in quite a few courses in the past and I have covered all the standard things so what now am I going to do? What now am I going to do that is different? I am not queuing up for the IMS courses like I used to, I feel that it is good for me to do it even if it only means that I get out of the office for a day and take stock of what is being covered in that particular days session that I am attending (BL 5)

These sentiments of uncertainty surrounding future direction are echoed by BL 1 & 3, who also allude to the lack of career progression prospects as being inhibitors to further participation. BL 1, for example, indicated that, having reached a plateau in his career, he found it difficult to visualise the next logical step as he did not possess the formal actuarial qualifications required to reach that next level:

MM: How important would you say learning and development is for you personally?

Fairly important, but I'm getting to the stage in my career - I've come right through the company and probably to the highest managerial level that I can probably attain in CSD. I mean, the management layer above me is led, close to 100%, by actuaries, so that seems to be a move made by the company and maybe some of the guys like myself are a bit disappointed by the lack of career progression. ... So in the job that I do, I see the need for development and training quite limited but in positions elsewhere in the company, which I am looking at, that means a fairly big re-learning (BL 1)

Similarly, BL 3, being a non graduate, felt that he had attained the highest possible level in the hierarchy open to him and, thus, could not see the benefits in undertaking the further significant learning necessary to reach the next level. This was compounded by the fact that this manager was relatively mature, being 50 years old.

The other three managers (BL 4, 8 & 9) in this medium category were influenced by certain pressures, which had led them to question the feasibility of undertaking further learning. For example, while describing himself as a learning enthusiast, BL 4 indicated that the effort in terms of time and money would outweigh the potential benefits of undertaking an MBA. Without being given the option of progressing on a full time basis, this manager felt the costs outweighed the benefits:

Well it's slightly theoretical [the question of undertaking an MBA].. I mean I would like to.. but I would need to win the lottery. ... I would like the choice, I would take time out from work and go and do an MBA somewhere, rather than doing it on distance learning basis. (BL 4)

In her remarks, BL 8 also emphasised her understanding of the need for continued development. This perceived need, however, was negatively constrained by the pressures of daily working life and thus, while she recognised the importance of updating her skills, it was done primarily on a need to know basis:

It [updating skill] is very important. Obviously I'm in computing and things are changing very rapidly and it's part of my job to keep up with the changes, even if they aren't directly affecting my job. People expect me to know what's going on... So it's important for me to keep up with everything as much as I can, to do with it

MM: So you think learning is important then?

Probably not really, I just do it because I've got to do it. I couldn't go home at night and study, basically, I've got to do it for my job. (BL 8)

In a similar vein, BL 9 expressed that, while he would like to undertake a qualification such as an MBA, the potential difficulties in terms of managing study and work may present a problem for him. For example, because this manager previously failed to complete his ACII exams due to pressures of work and study, he had difficulties with the idea of undertaking formal learning at this stage:

From a personal level, I like to lead a full life and I was looking with a view to do the part time weekend MBA course and I realised there wasn't enough hours the way I was leading life for me to go at it and do it justice. This was perhaps my downfall when I first started doing the Chartered Insurance exams by correspondence... Now I'm certainly more motivated to study, but I wouldn't go on to set myself up for a fall, so I would maybe look to do full time as opposed to part time. ... I tend to think all or nothing I would want to fully commit myself and give it a good shot and I don't think I would be inclined to start something part time or by correspondence only to fall at an early hurdle. That would definitely motivate me (BL 9)

c) Managers in high category (good prospects of participation)

BL 6 felt that there was a high need for her to undertake the ACII qualifications because of her limited experience of the insurance sector. Also as the below quotation illustrates she was fully aware that adding to her skills and knowledge base could potentially be very beneficial for the future:

The correspondence course that I'm doing just now. ... I don't come from an insurance industry background so when I moved here I was doing projects and I didn't have a full appreciation of what the company was about, the full beauty of it. So I thought it would be good to do something like this to get the basic things about insurance, pensions and life insurance - the whole industry basically and that's the main reason I did it. I believe that in the circumstances now you just don't know where you'll be in a few years, or few months, time and I think you have to try and develop your own knowledge of things so you're easier to move into new areas if you need to. I mean I don't want to be in a situation where you're not in a job and at an age where it's more difficult to get a job, so that's the kind of thing that's keeping me going. (BL 6)

The above scenario provides an example of a manager who identified a gap in her knowledge and has taken steps to plug this gap.

A5.2.2 Fears or Insecurities surrounding Learning Participation - Emotional

a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

As can be seen from Table A5.5, four managers were placed in this low category in relation to emotional factors and their resulting propensity to learn. What was interesting was that two very different themes and type of manager emerged here. For two in particular (BL 3 & 7) because they were so emotionally assured and communicated no concerns about their future careers they were unlikely to participate in any further learning or development activities. Meanwhile for the other two managers in BL it was considered that they had

certain emotional factors which could induce fears or insecurities for them and hence prevent them from taking part further in learning.

For BL 3 and BL 7 what became clear was their relative contentment with their career progression in BL and they were satisfied with their current positions appreciating that further movement through the hierarchy was not really feasible for them. As the following comments from BL 7 sum up, both of these managers did not really have any fears with regards to their future:

I now report into the IT director in the company who is a member of the Executive, so you could say I've moved quite a long way up through the organisation. I have within the last 3 months, taken on a new role within Information Systems – a strategy role. I suspect my career progression, depending on when I leave, retire or...assuming I'm still with Borders Life ... will be in terms of different roles within IS, rather than moving further up the managerial ladder. You can only have one IS director and you can have 5 or 6 working for him. So I don't have any particular aspirations to be an IS Director but I still feel if I'm doing a job, progression will be in moving around slightly different areas, perhaps having input in different areas. (BL 7)

From this quotation it can be seen that there is very little chance of BL 7 taking on further learning or development at this stage in his career and this was also the case for BL 3. However for the other two managers there may be a low likelihood of further learning and development because they were at the opposite end of the spectrum and certain emotional insecurities certainly did inhibit their chances of further learning.

For the first manager (BL 8) there were some regrets that she had not had much opportunity to develop her people management skills, and was to some extent uncertain about how her career would develop in the future. She felt that much of the problem was related to the actual organisation itself, (issues related to opportunity are discussed in more detail in Section A5.3.2) in the fact that in her four years as a manager she did not think she had had *'any management training'*. She felt that ultimately this was detrimental to her career development because as she communicated *'if she had had better training it would certainly have helped me to deal with them staff and management in BL in a better manner than just stumbling along'*.

For the second manager in this group, BL 9, there were also some emotional issues connected to career development in that he was also unsure and somewhat frustrated about what was likely to happen in his future career. He felt unclear *'being a non actuary, where the ceiling will come'*, but also more importantly in relation to emotional factors he almost appeared reticent (as a manager) to ask for guidance or support with career planning:

Interviewer: So what constraints do you think are present in relation to that career development?

There is no structure. I have no clear vision at the moment, certainly because I'm having to work it out and there is nobody else who is going to. I don't think I could go to group training and say I really want to develop. It's not an image they promote anyway, for someone at my level. Because you have to go along and firstly admit that you are less effective than you feel you should be.

Interviewer: And it's something you don't want to do?

You wouldn't admit it. But it's a bit like going to your boss and saying I feel so stressed. No, you don't do that because it's like 'cheerio promotion' (BL 9)

In his interview this manager also communicated that for him there were some fears surrounding actually taking part in certain learning and development activities, which could potentially discourage him. Whilst acknowledging that more interactive styles of learning would be best, he felt that he could be prone to embarrassment, especially if faced with colleagues, and certainly did not relish the prospect of having to *'stand up and make a fool of him self'*.

b) Managers in medium category (some prospects of participation)

Four managers in BL displayed, if not outright fears or insecurities about either their career development or participation in learning opportunities, certainly some trepidation with respect to these issues in the future. There was an inherent realisation that nothing was certain about how their careers would develop, but as experienced managers (two actuaries, IT specialist and Pensions manager) there was also an element of feeling that ultimately they would be insulated somewhat.

As has been already mentioned in the Section A5.2.1 when perceptual issues and learning were discussed, BL 1 certainly had fears about future career direction at this stage, and because of increasing pressures, realised that you had to work very hard at present to meet deadlines and satisfy targets. Of the other managers in this category, for example BL 5 and BL 6, described their pressurised managerial roles at present as *'fiendish'* and *'uncertain'* respectively. Like BL1 they appreciated the need to continue to perform to a consistently high standard. With this in mind there could be potential barriers to learning because of a tendency to concentrate on more short term issues.

In relation to other emotional barriers to learning present amongst these four managers it was notable that both of the actuaries, BL 2 and 5 specifically mentioned that they had issues with using some new technology. Potentially their fears could lead them to hesitate in participation in some learning events. BL 2 summed up the situation:

In my case, there is also the problem of lack of PC skills that inhibit me. I mean my children are further ahead at 9 or 10 than I was at 18, which is slightly embarrassing. That is probably the big thing for me because a lot of the time I'm catching up with everybody else (BL 2)

Still on the subject of having to deal with potential embarrassment, BL 6, offered similar comments that illustrated that she also did relish moving outwith her comfort zone:

Interviewer: OK, I'm thinking now about barriers to learning really, any you think of any factors which have inhibited your participation in the learning activity?

Well sometimes when you're on training courses with the whole of the department, you feel like you don't want to make a fool of yourself, that's always a bit inhibiting. Also, when you do the everyday bits where you work as an individual and then you go back into a group and you find that working as a team works better than working as an individual. I always get so mad at myself. If when I don't get things right and I hate it and I never see the point in these kind of training things because I feel so downhearted and the point is lost on you about the team. My own inadequacies always come up, which must be a personality trait in me. (BL 6)

c) Managers in high category (good prospects of participation)

As Table A5.5 illustrates, only one manager in BL was placed in the 'high' category. This manager was an interesting case because after analysing his interviews he had a very high propensity to participate in further learning and development activities. BL 4 provided an example of how a traumatic emotional event (redundancy), had refocused his attention and desire for learning. The fact that he had identified a real need was reported in the previous section examining perceptual issues, but it is important to emphasise in this section concentrating on emotional factors how a traumatic event can realign a manager to the realities of organisational life:

I was made redundant from my position in London and that has coloured my view of what I should be doing to look after myself, if you like - keeping myself up to speed, employable, but that's coloured my view. I haven't taken sufficient steps to achieving that but that's there in the background. (BL 4)

A5.2.3 Motivation to participate in Learning Activities – Motivational

Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

After analysing the various responses to the questions in the interviews from BL Managers it was concluded that three managers in particular displayed a relatively low motivation to continue to participate in (particularly more formal) development. In essence there was only one real theme that connected these managers, in that they all essentially felt that at this stage of their careers little real reward would accrue.

The comments of BL 5 are indicative of the type of manager one may expect to find at this mid-career stage in a life assurance organisation. He was highly qualified and in essence had reached the level where he felt more job related learning was not as vital as when he was a younger manager. As was shown when his comments were discussed in Section A5.2.1, he was at the stage where he had already built up a significant knowledge and hence finding the incentive to be more motivated to continue was difficult:

I suppose the other barrier to learning is really incentives, there is no incentive at my level to develop further like there is at junior level. Before I qualified as an actuary I knew that once I qualified I would be in the category of official and have a certain minimum grade a certain status and a certain job, that quite a big incentive for getting on. Any other qualifications that I was to go for or any other learning that I was to go for really would be because I wanted it. There is really nothing else that says you are required to do this and in return we will put you into this kind of job or category, so there is no kind of incentive like there is when you are in your 20's or 30's to do something (BL 5)

BL7 and BL 2 forwarded similar comments which underlined that as managers who were highly qualified (ACII), there was not really much incentive after a long working day to think about further work related development. For example BL 7 communicated that development was more important where it was actually taking place on the job and he had never really found more formal learning '*a priority to move ahead*'.

I've never really been on anything that would be talking about managerial theory or how you should be progressing things. I've always been of the opinion that a lot of that was just about experience and as new managers came on board I think the important thing there is to let them know that they can come to me and use some of the experience that I've gained over the years. (BL 7)

Also the fact that BL 2 was an actuary who had participated in very formal learning had meant that he was more motivated to incorporate learning in terms of Continuing Professional Development necessary for his job, rather than an MBA for example:

I think there are some people who've considered doing MBAs, I don't think I would just at the moment. I think there are a couple of the new actuaries who are quite keen on the MBAs but there's an awful lot who just want to forget about exams as they near the end of the actuarial exams. If you do 4, 5 or 6 years without a break [it is hard]. The ones who tend to do the MBAs are quite ambitious for a start, from Heriot-Watt [Actuarial Maths Course], who have missed a few years of exams and feel they've only done 2 years studying and feel they need to do a bit more. (BL 2)

b) Managers in medium category (some prospects of participation)

For the four managers who were placed in the medium category the unifying theme was that although they did display their motivation, certain constraining factors were present. BL 8 indicated that the prospect of continuing at this stage in more formal learning activities was not particularly appealing, and hence she was more interested in continuing in those activities that were directly related to their current jobs.

For two other managers here the factors that led to a constraining of their motivation to participate in further learning and development were essentially related to the time and costs required. As has been mentioned before for BL 4 the financial costs of undertaking such an intensive (full time) MBA were prohibitive for him. In a similar vein, BL 9 felt that to succeed an MBA would also have to be the full time mode, and he thought it was extremely unlikely that he would be able to pursue this qualification through that mode of delivery.

For the final manager in this medium group (BL 1), the main restraining force on his motivation was his confusion about what exactly was the next best step for him in his career. What he was certain of was that if he were to proceed further in the organisation he would have to undergo considerable retraining. But again what he did not appear to be certain about was in what way he should develop.

c) Managers in high category (good prospects of participation)

The remaining manager in BL 6, not surprisingly given what has already been reported in the first section relating to perceptual barriers to learning was felt to be highly motivated to continue in learning and development activities. In Section A5.2.1 it was shown that this manager was currently participating in the ACII course in order to broaden her knowledge of the life assurance industry. She also communicated that to her undertaking such a course was like taking out an 'insurance policy' for the future:

It's more (undertaking the ACII) from the point of view of, if the strings are cut, or I'm forced out, then you've maybe got a little more choice because you have got another string to your bow, as it were. It's like an insurance policy, if you can adapt by having that bit of more knowledge then you're more attractive to an employer within or out with your own company. (BL 6)

In espousing such a view it is clear that this manager is fully aware of the real need for managers to take more responsibility for their own destiny in the future.

A5.2.4 Previous Learning Experiences– Cognitive (General)

In the section below the managers' experiences of learning from compulsory up to third level higher education are analysed and, secondly, in Section A5.2.5 their work related learning experiences are discussed. Tables A5.7 and A5.8 summarise firstly how the Borders Life managers felt about both the compulsory or third level learning and, secondly the vocational learning which they have received up until now associated to their jobs.

a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

Table A5.7 illustrates the three categories the managers were placed into in relation to their previous experiences from compulsory education and learning activities up to third level higher education. After analysing the interview comments (BL 1), only one manager was felt to fit into this category connecting reduced participation in learning activities to his experiences of formal compulsory education. This manager communicated that he had left school directly after his Higher Examinations and the final years of his compulsory

education were described as a '*wa b out*' where he had failed to live up to his potential and therefore did not get a place at university.

Reflecting on the situation now he also felt that probably not going to university was the best decision then because he probably would not have coped very well with the relaxed university life. However there were also indications that not persevering with further learning and the experiences had affected his further education and learning. When asked about this it appeared he had not really built up the ability or self discipline to study on more formal learning activities, which were available in the office when he first entered the organisation:

Interviewer: So it did impact on y ur further deci ons to study for example in the j b or, wh n I'm talking about tud I'm really talking about training on the job.

Yes, because there is obviously further education associated with the industry, ACII etc. Really the environment back in 1978 in the office, were further education outside the office, were in some way was supported, people were encouraged to do that. On the job training was very simple, data entering, inputting stuff - I did try further education outside work when I was working but coming to the industry working a 9 5pm regime or later was limiting the hours, so I didn't complete. (BL 1)

b) Managers in medium category (some prospects of participation)

Two managers were placed in the medium category in relation to their past experiences of full-time formal education, based either at school or university. For BL 6 there was an indication that she found university more difficult to get through than examinations taken during school. It was at university for example that she failed her first exam and she readily admits that that came as a '*shock*' and failing exams was '*terrible*'. However another aspect which she communicated when describing her experiences of more formal education, which maybe more relevant to the decisions she has made regarding further learning participation was that she had problems understanding the need to learn more formal elements, as the following comments illustrate:

In general terms, I find it hard to link the training that you've had to the work in terms of more general type training I think this is a theme that's running through my life, what has this training got to do with things and trying to mobilise the content? That's an issue. (BL 6)

For the other manager (BL 7), the fact that he failed his first degree had induced some regrets about his time at university. However as is shown in the further qualifications (see Table 5.3 for details) that eventually gained (OU Degree, ACII & FCII) this setback essentially acted as the catalyst to further learning. However as the following quotation illustrates achieving these qualifications whilst working in a full time role was not considered as being a particularly easy option:

Interviewer: Is there any event or aspect that stand out from that?

Difficult to say, I suppose if I went back I would probably try and complete the university degree early without having to go back. While you were working to do part time education and Open University, which was quite hard work to balance the two. While working for Borders Life, the study I was doing there, I was always eligible for day release, as long as I did evening class, so from that point of view and I think that's always been the case in the company, day release has been available for more education. (BL 7)

The above quote illustrates that participating in learning activities whilst studying became almost natural for this manager, however it is interesting to note that with the benefit of hindsight he would have preferred to have persisted with his original course at university.

c) Managers in high category (good prospects of participation)

The majority (six) of the managers in BL were placed in this high propensity category with respect to their experiences of formal compulsory and third level education. Like the managers from the other case organisations in the main those in BL who were placed in this 'high' propensity had solid track records of formal education. For example included here were two actuaries, a chartered Accountant, two university graduates as well as one manager who had entered the company after sitting Higher examinations.

In essence the main theme that emerged from the comments was that their path through formal education had been relatively uneventful and appeared to be something that had to be completed to move into one's desired career. The following example from BL 5, one of the actuaries illustrates this view:

Interviewer: Could you give me details of your previous experience of formal education?

Well I started at school and I got 5 highers and 4 A Levels and I went to university and studied mathematics and done a four year B.Sc. Degree course in Mathematics and got an upper second. Beyond that, since I started in the life assurance industry, I studied for and qualified as a fellow of the faculty of actuaries (FFA), those are my formal qualifications. (BL 5)

The other manager in this high group had a more interesting path formal education and learning activities where she worked for a while before returning to full time education and deciding on a different career path than had originally been embarked upon. However when asked if she felt her experiences of formal education had made any impact on her decisions to participate in further learning she felt that it had not.

A5 2 5 Previous Learning Experiences– Cognitive (Vocational)

a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

As can be observed from Table A5.8, the same manager, BL 1, was also placed in this 'low' propensity category. In was conveyed in his interview that certain experiences of work related learning had been negative. The most important aspect of his remarks was related to the abilities of the trainers that he had encountered while participating in some work related activities. He felt particularly negative when trainers turned out not to be the experts that they were built up to be and as a result the learning experience was poor:

One of the things it would get down to is individuals, trainers. I've done quite a lot of training myself, coming up through my career, and have had some training on how to train so I'm fairly ..well I'm in no way an expert. .but I think personalities turn me off, the ability of the trainers to take on what you say, to be honest and say, no I don't know the answer to that. (BL 1)

BL 1 also mentioned that often he felt that he ended up learning certain things on the job because there was not the opportunities to participate in courses at the most appropriate time. With this in mind it appeared that by the time he had actually got round to participating he had already got to grips with the main aspects, which he realised was not ideal, and therefore the actual training intervention seemed to be less worthwhile. These issues relating to the availability of opportunities is discussed in much more detail in Section A5.3.2, which examines the attitudes of BL managers to the culture in the organisation in relation to MD.

b) Managers in medium category (some prospects of participation)

Five managers were put into the 'medium' propensity to learn category after analysing descriptions of their previous learning experiences. Their responses indicated that certain elements of their previous learning and development activities were not ideal, and although would not necessarily mean that they would not participate further, such experiences certainly made them think at some length about undertaking more development.

Amongst these five managers two broadly similar themes emerged that indicated that in the future they would have to consider the real worth of participating further in development courses or activities. For three managers the main issue was connected to the delivery methods that they had encountered in vocational learning (either ACII, or Actuarial qualifications). A number of points emerged here, which showed that if they were to participate again in such a major piece of formal learning, for example an MBA, the correspondence or distance learning method might not be the preferred option for them. For example BL 5 felt he had had a '*particu arly mis ra le experience*' whilst undertaking his

actuarial qualifications by correspondence, whilst BL 2 also spoke about the ‘*dubious support*’ he got for the course where he had to ‘*do everything himself*’. Also BL 5 underlined that if he were to do an MBA by distance learning or correspondence he would need to be reassured about the quality of the delivery:

Interviewer: Is there any particular aspect that stands out from your educational experience or what you have done in the past? You mentioned the actuarial course – was that a correspondence course?

It was yes and that was a particularly miserable experience as far as the learning process is concerned because part-timers ran the correspondence course. All the tutors and examiners were working full time in life offices or as consulting actuaries and they had their day jobs to do. The course was very badly structured and the material you were given to work through in lessons did not relate terribly well to the exam questions you were posed and the turnaround time for simple things like getting lessons marked and returned was poor to abysmal. ... It was a particularly nasty experience if you like and yes I got through and the main influence in getting through is simply the amount of work you do but as a learning experience it was very badly structured.

Interviewer: Has it affected your decisions regarding further study? Say for example if you wanted to go on and do further study would it influence you if it were a correspondence course?

No, I have no prejudices in that respect but I certainly would want to have reassurance that it was a properly formulated and supported type course. The only thing I have considered doing, and not recently, is an MBA but I looked at the amount of effort and commitment that was required and decided in terms of work pressure here and family commitments that it was not going to be feasible and I never even started it. (BL 5)

As can be seen for the final part of the above quote, BL 5 evidently did not enjoy his experience of the correspondence course. Although he said that this experience would not affect further decisions, in the future it would seem that he would be a far more demanding customer and in need of reassurance that any interventions were well structured and of good quality. Ultimately however he felt that physical time pressures would be the most influential barriers for him. In essence the other manager from these three who had experienced the correspondence course as a learning delivery method, BL 9, who eventually dropped out of, the ACII correspondence course, echoed this view. He reiterated the sentiments of BL 5 by indicating that doing an MBA by correspondence course may prove to be very difficult due to commitments on his time and he felt that the effect of such pressures could be linked to his eventual dropping out of the ACII course:

From a personal level, I like to lead a full life and I was looking with a view to do the part time weekend MBA course and I realised there wasn’t enough hours – the way I was leading life – for me to go at it and do it justice, which was perhaps my downfall when I first started doing the Chartered Insurance exams by correspondence. I was still very happy that I had a 9.5 job and then I could switch off and the last thing I wanted to do was start studying again. (BL 9)

The other main theme that emerged amongst these managers in this ‘medium’ propensity group, was their rather negative or sceptical attitude about development opportunities related to their jobs in the company. As has already been discussed above,

BL 2, indicated that he had received little support whilst undertaking the actuarial course and was therefore quite negative about that form of learning. When asked further about his other more recent experiences of MD, his comments were equally tinged with scepticism, as the following reply to the question asking for his views on management development and learning, illustrate:

I think it's [MD] very variable, the courses you can go on are very variable and there are some which are a complete waste of time. I have been on some, 2 or 3, which have been useful but others, which have not been particularly helpful. (BL 2)

For BL 6 also there was clear evidence connected to her responses that she too was unconvinced about much of the more vocational and work related learning that she had taken part in. The most important element that she communicated was that often she found it hard to see where the actual issues learnt would be relevant and 'mobilised' for her actual job. Another important issue that was mentioned in connection to her experiences of vocational type learning linked to her area (particularly reading relevant journals and using Computer Based Training, CBT) was that often because of the subjects unexciting nature, learning about it was sometimes difficult:

Interviewer: Do you think if the journals were done in a different form, say multi-media or computer based, would they be more suitable for you or would you be prepared to dabble in the internet, things like that?

Yes, well, I've been using the internet more often recently just picking up some bits and pieces of the project I'm on and I find that quite good. Conversely, when I've done CBT training, I've found it a complete drag, I've found it quite difficult because I can't pay attention to it and I'd go into a daydream when looking at the screen and it doesn't go into my head. I'm not sure but I just don't know how desperate I can get, the internet might be a good thing to summarise things, the key points from the journals for example because sometimes they're terribly dry and they're written in jargon and wording that's so unappealing and it gives me no pleasure to read stuff like that. (BL 6)

For the fifth manager (BL 3) in this medium category, he too had some issues about the work related development learning activities, he had taken part in. For him he felt that much of the learning had been undertaken to '*satisfy the task at hand*', and he was not particularly developmental oriented. In essence the main issue that he communicated here was linked to the opportunities which have had during his time at BL. This issue is discussed in much more detail in Section A5.3.2 when the culture in relation to MD is considered.

c) Managers in high category (good prospects of participation)

As can be appreciated, the three final managers (BL 4, 7 & 8) in BL communicated on the whole relatively positive experiences of work related vocational learning and development activities. In effect it emerged that these managers were satisfied with their experiences of vocational learning interventions for a number of key reasons. For example BL 4, who

participated in formal classroom based learning to gain his CA qualification, found that he enjoyed the interaction of having a tutor and an assembled class. Indeed he indicated that when considering the available options regarding studying for an MBA he would be seriously inclined to take such a route again:

I personally need the discipline of a more formal environment. I need it for all sorts of reasons, not just my native indolence, but because I've got family and all sorts of other things. I just find it extremely difficult to work from home. ... I need interaction with other people to be able to say something, say something stupid and air it and get a debate going. I suppose it's horses for courses, and within a time frame - I mean you can't spend all day listening to someone talking, you have to break it up a bit. So bits of formal teaching, bits of group work, a bit of working on your own - mix it all up (BL 4)

The case of BL 7 is an interesting one. This manager had experienced a fairly wide variety of learning interventions and methods of delivery and appeared to recognise the merits attached to each, whether they are correspondence, distance learning or classroom based. After failing to complete his first degree at university, through participating in an Open University course, undertaking the ACII examinations, as well as other work related learning he had become much more aligned to learning and appeared to enjoy whatever he took part in. When pressed on his most preferred learning style and delivery method, he indicated that each were appropriate for the particular things that he was learning at the time. However he did state that interaction with others was a benefit (OU Summer School, particularly enjoyable), as well as having professional and fully qualified tutors to teach the subject. In conclusion he summed up by stating that he would recommend both the OU and correspondence based courses (as learning methods) to prospective candidates.

For the final manager in this grouping, BL 8, again like both of the managers described above she had enjoyed a number of different learning experiences. One important point that she made however was that for her there must be real efforts to put the material learnt whilst on a course for example into practice relatively quickly for the learning to be wholly satisfactory.

A5.3 Extrinsic Issues and Learning

A5.3.1 Organisation Culture

In this subsection, the manager's views in relation to BL's culture are explored in detail. The most important aspects that each manager communicated about the organisational culture are shown in Table A5.9.

a) Managers in negative category (organisation culture inhibits learning)

From the nine managers interviewed, four were considered to have forwarded views signifying that there were a series of elements regarding the organisational culture that for them could inhibit learning and development. There was unanimity amongst all four of these managers that as the organisation was changing; the implication was that the culture was also in transition. In simple terms there were two views connected to this transition. For two of the managers there were clear fears that as new ideas, structures and controls were introduced, then also many of the good things about BL's working environment could be lost. The main implication of what the other two managers said was that although there had been undoubtedly changes in the culture, in reality change was still needed particularly amongst those in senior positions.

For the two managers (BL 3 & 5) who espoused this latter view, the main complaint that they had was related to the direction that was been given from the more senior managers of the organisation. Both of these managers clearly felt that top managers could implicitly affect how training and development was viewed and its take-up within the organisation. To fully understand how both of these (relatively senior) managers viewed the scenario it is interesting to look directly at their comments. Firstly when asked about organisational constraints BL 3 forwarded the following:

Interviewer: Just briefly before I asked you about more personal issues on barriers to learning - do you think that there are any other barriers that are really rooted more in the organisation in terms of barriers to learning?

I think its just really the culture of the organisation. You know where the boss has been trying to get in a management and development training programme with out sourced companies that specialise in that, but you know for the last 4 or 5 years it has really fallen on deaf ears and never really got anywhere. So I think the culture of the organisation or the thinking of the executive in relation to management development and training is not as far forward as it should be so I think there would have to be a change at that level to make anything really happen. (BL 3)

By the same token BL 5 also summed up how he felt more senior managers had a very important part to play in encouraging and ensuring that learning and development were raised high on the agenda. However for him, particularly because of the culture in place as engendered through top managers, this just did not happen:

Another barrier if you like is that I don't see that the culture of learning is one that we have here there is no particular encouragement here from senior management or the executive. Yes it is in the appraisal form, but what I would expect to see in a proper learning organisation is a policy of encouragement where there is something where the chief executive downwards themselves attended training and were seen to be attending training You know not being afraid to attend the training with others who were much their junior in the organisation. I suppose they would have a fear of being exposed in some areas about not knowing anything about something while their subordinate might know a lot more. But I think either you are going to be a learning organisation or you are not and if you are then everyone has to accept that they have things to learn and not be afraid of it. (BL 5)

The main issue that was related by the other two managers (BL 8 & 9), in the 'negative' group was that the company had really gone too far in the commercial direction. Therefore BL was too cost conscious and because 'successful businessmen' were now running it who didn't understand BL the culture had been seriously damaged. For both of these managers the implications of such changes were far reaching. BL 8 for example felt that the employees were now much more instrumental and essentially 'everyone was now looking out for themselves', to the detriment of other employees and the organisation as a whole.

In a similar vein BL9, felt that the culture had 'changed to be far more money based' and hence was not nearly as paternalistic as it once was. The obvious downside for him of this change was that as certain individuals 'who would not stab you in the back' had moved on, they had been replaced with others who he felt he could not 'trust'. Ultimately he perceived new employees to be not very loyal to BL because they were effectively only motivated by money and their own careers. To illustrate this view he cited the example of the proliferation of IT consultants (on short-term contracts) in the IT department who were only interested in their next career move, and certainly had no commitment to BL:

The CBT courses that are available in our learning centre are jam packed with contractors, people who don't actually work for us are using it to hone their skills. These are the people who should be locked out.

Interviewer: So you don't think they're very loyal then?

No, they're looking at the next contract. If you're leaving in 3 months and you need to get a contract arranged that require a specific skill and there's a CBT sitting in the same building that'll teach you that skill, you'll go down there and learn it. (BL 9)

b) Managers in neutral category (elements of culture undermine learning)

Two managers were placed in this 'neutral' category for BL as a result of their comments in relation to the culture of the organisation and how it might affect learning. The essential feature of their statements was their pragmatism about the need to embrace change and ultimately they felt that the organisation was moving in the right general direction, but there were also certain elements within the culture that were not quite right yet and ultimately could undermine learning.

BL 4 felt for example that the company's top management had went some way to shake off the 'civil service' type culture that was prevalent when he joined the company, but as the following comments illustrate he still realises that the culture is something that is very hard to change:

Interviewer: How would you describe the organisation's culture?

Transitional I mean it was we've been 5 years a Plc and we've still got some deep rooted, traditional Scottish, mutual, civil service sort of attitudes, particularly at the middle management level I would say senior and executive management are extremely outward looking, competitive we have a very good management team at the top, which is why we're successful We've still got a lot to do and part of my job is trying to change the culture We've still got a lot of outdated working practices that we need to shape up, but this is at lower levels. (BL 4)

As can be appreciated, the important difference in what this manager felt about the culture and those in the previous category was that the senior managers were attempting to deliver a more realistic culture, but at lower levels this was often not realised.

In his comments, another manager in this category BL 2, felt that the culture *was fair and generally ok for the whole lot of us*. However like BL 4 he also acknowledged that there were some elements in the organisation that were perhaps not ideal and some departments (customer service) who appeared to get an amount of 'hassle' as he described it. Therefore BL 2, understood the need to change certain aspects to make the culture even more fair and to stop this 'kicking' of the 'front-end' service departments who inevitably will be viewed as the 'west' in the organisation.

c) Managers in positive category (organisation culture facilitates learning)

In their interviews the remaining three managers displayed very positive sentiments about the culture that was in place in BL. The main elements that these three managers felt were good about the culture was that although there had been changes, an environment of paternalism still existed which had its benefits. Also there was an impression, particularly from the remarks of BL 1 that the communication systems that were in place allowed him to have input and about what exactly was happening throughout the organisation:

I've joined right from school, and I've seen a lot of changes, I do worry that I'm a bit institutionalised really and working for another company, well, I'm absolutely loyal to Borders Life, they've done me pretty well. I do wonder what cultures are like in other offices but I have moved round the departments, which has helped. It gets down to personalities, I would say overall the culture is a very friendly, open, want to hear what you've got to say, communicative upward and downwards and sideways, one to take on everyone's ideas at every level and the only hindrance to that is personalities at certain levels doing certain things against that. (BL 1)

For the other two managers in this 'positive' category, they too had noticed the changes, but were satisfied that these changes, most designed to tighten up the cost structures, had not negatively impacted on what they felt was already a very supportive environment. BL 6 in particular was complimentary about the culture that was in place:

When I first joined, that was 8 years ago, it was beginning to expand but it still had a very paternalistic and family feel to it. As it has grown, more controls have come into place, but it's still a friendly company. We're quite open, there's a lot of communication, whether people choose to listen to it or not, there's still quite a lot of information cascading down from Executive which is there for people to look at to see how the company is developing, to see where it's going, to see what its intentions are, to see how it's doing against other competitors. Also I think the actual conditions of the company are excellent, we'd be hard pressed to find a better company in terms of the pay and conditions (BL 6)

A5.3.2 Management Development Culture

Managers in negative category (MD culture inhibits learning)

As can be seen by referring to Table A5.10, five managers were considered to align to the viewpoint that there was a poor MD and training culture in place in BL. A number of themes emerged which appeared to underline that in this organisation there were deficiencies in support, structure and opportunities as witnessed by these managers' remarks.

In relation to the first issue, all five of the managers named support from either senior managers or other colleagues as a factor. For example BL 1, BL 3 & BL 5 were particularly scathing of the amount of support they believed that more senior managers put into the whole area of development. In the section exploring the overall organisational culture, the comments, which BL 3 and 5 made, illustrated their disappointment in the commitment of top managers towards learning. BL 1 augmented this by noting that in effect his direct manager did not either seem to be terribly interested in how much training or development those who report to him participated in. For him the importance of training and development could be summed up through looking at the appraisal system:

There probably could be something more formal in there rather than a 5 minute, not even that, add on to the end of an appraisal, you know, how do you feel you should be developed, what would you like to do, you tell me. It should be more of a formal lets sit down every 2 or 3 months and talk about development and dig deeper at a higher level with a more specific look at your job, what developments do you need for that, what developments do you need to make the career path that you envisage. So the company and the individual could benefit from having something more formal, rather than what is probably an active talk to a big degree. (BL 1)

Another point connected to those above surrounding the issue of opportunities to discuss ones development needs was mentioned by BL 8. She felt that there were some 'bad managers' in place and she linked this directly to the fact that there was very little training in management or people skills. The following comments clarify her viewpoints on this issue:

Interviewer: Do you feel that there isn't really an opportunity to take up learning opportunities?

No. There's actually a lot of people don't get a lot of management training. I came from an IT background and to start off you manage a team, then your team gets bigger and then you're expected to do a lot of project management, team management and this is the hardest thing of all and there's no training. You've got an awful lot of bad managers out there and there is very little training.

Interview r: What do you mean by bad managers?

People who have been good technically but they're not good managers i.e., they don't listen to their staff, and they just can't talk to their staff. (BL 8)

As well as this issue connected to how supportive managers were for development, both at the line and more senior level, what became apparent amongst a number of these managers (BL 1, 3, & 9) was that support was also lacking from colleagues. At best it appeared that some of their colleagues were unaware of their development activities, and at worst they resented that development activities were being participated in. For example BL spoke of not wanting to '*step out and be proactive on the development side when everyone's so busy at all levels*'. In a similar vein BL 3 made the point that '*the company has still got a reserved idea about this, where flying to London is fine, but flying to Paris or Brussels or Rome is viewed as something that is not quite what you should be doing*'. The most negative illustration of this lack of support amongst the colleagues was shown by BL 9. He intimated that if you were to go on a '*touchy-feely [sic] sort of team-worky [sic] leadership course*' (Outward Bound Course) for example, it would be viewed by some as if you were '*away on holiday*'.

BL 9 also made the point that he very much doubted whether he would be allowed to take a sabbatical and do an MBA for year full-time. He summed up his views thus:

Interviewer: How would you describe the culture in relation to management development and training?

It starts and stops and I don't think that's changed. I think there would probably be a significant change in culture if I said I want to do my MBA full time and they let me do it - which would be a significant change in culture. That would be the indication for me, I would really sing their praises. (BL 9)

b) Managers in neutral category (elements of MD culture undermine learning)

Three managers (BL 2, 4 & 6) were placed in this neutral category in relation to the MD Culture. Although they felt the company was moving forward, there were still elements relating to the past needing to be addressed. To some extent all of these managers' comments were linked in a common theme relating to the actual training and development of managers at the levels where ultimately most of those at the mid career stage would be apparent. For BL 2, although the culture in relation to training and development was improving, he had some concern about where the majority of it was actually taking place. The following comments illustrate his point of view:

Interview r: What would you say is the culture in terms of training and development?

I think it has improved as compared to 10 years ago. Training seems to be much more important but it's still not perfect. There are still a lot of people I know who will not make much of an effort and they may well miss out. I think it's changing someone's perception and this might be quite difficult.

Interview 1: In terms of a cultural practical thing, do you think there's a real learning culture?

It depends how low you are down the chain - I think that culture is there lower down the order, the ambitious service people really do get stuck in and they do try and learn. The learning seems to be worse the higher you get and I don't know if that's the case everywhere, it possibly is, but they don't think they need to go on things because they can't see how it's going to help. Courses have to be seen to be applicable to the managers involved - you've got to really get the course that matches the people. Early on I think there is a learning culture later on? [shrug] (BL 2)

Some of the comments emanating from BL 4 appeared to back up this view that there was little real development taking place amongst the middle and senior managerial ranks – certainly in relation to management and people skills. In his interview BL 4 even went as far as describing some of his colleagues in a very negative way: *'As I look around I see an element of the Neanderthal about some of our managers - they've no idea about managing people'*. As can be appreciated, such a view is similar to that of BL 8 whose views in general were more negative about the MD Culture. However BL 4 also forwarded comments that illustrated that he too felt that there were certain elements of the MD culture that were undoubtedly improving:

When I first joined, training was very much like it had been in the civil service with extra holidays, you know 'you've done good so you're entitled to a piece of training'. It had nothing to do with work. I think that's pretty much changed, I'm pleased to say. (BL 4)

The third manager here, BL 6 also talked generally how the training and development culture was improving, but again she intimated that there really needed to be more focus and guidance for all employees about what they need to be concentrating on. She felt that really the most potent tool to enable this to happen was the annual appraisal. But she felt that certainly amongst her level there were problems in that often managers would be unwilling to focus on learning that was really quite essential for them, as her following comments sum up:

Interview 1: Just maybe more on your level, your stage in the company, you said about disinterest among the most senior members, is that a problem for people around your position?

There's also maybe a bit of arrogance. You know people thinking, well I've been here long enough, I know enough about it, I don't need someone telling me how to negotiate with so and so and there might be that level of arrogance in some people but presumably they'd never admit to that. (BL 6)

b) Managers in positive category (MD culture facilitates learning)

As can be seen in Table A5.10 it can be seen in his interview only one manager was felt to have described the culture of BL in relation to training and development in a staunchly positive way. In effect his views in relation to training and development were similar to those that he had in relation to the organisational culture. He had a general feeling that if a

manager, or any employee for that matter, really wanted to participate in some learning or development activity then nothing emanating from the organisation would stop them:

I think the training is available for managers to use for training them elve if they want to u e it I think we have a fairly good culture with regard to the type of courses that are available, we pend a lot of time, effort and money on trying to give the type of training that are valuable to the company. We've got a fairly healthy attitude towards training, I don't think we restrict people to one course a year I think w look at the individuals and train them to the level they need. Training I would say is two things: formal training a lot of it done by people within Borders Life, but there's the on the job type training as well and I think we view that as pretty important.

Interviewer: Are resources easily available for training?

I've never had any problem for myself or for my staff in getting on courses. Clearly as long as it's relevant is the important thing, but no. (BL 7)

A5.3.3 Physical Resource Issues

Table A5.11 illustrates the managers' in BL perspectives on how physical resource issues impacted on their learning and development activity. As in the previous sections there are three categories depending on the extent to which the managers believed such physical factors inhibit or facilitate learning activity amongst employees in the organisation.

a) Managers in negative category (resource issues inhibit learning)

Similar to the interviewed managers in the other organisations studied, a number of interviewees in BL spoke in very negative terms about the affects of physical restraints on both their own and other managers participation in development activities. Four managers (BL 1, 3, 5 & 8) were placed in this 'negative' category after analysing their comments.

Some of the most pertinent comments from any manager amongst those interviewed in the five organisations came from BL 5, who had clearly conceptualised that it was not sufficient to simply generalise about time being a constraint on ones participation in development activities. As the following comments show, to BL 5 there were three angles connected to the issue of time:

Time is a generalisation. I suppose there are three aspects to time. The first one is time to actually arrange it because training is something that you can always say, well I ll arrange that next week, so you don't actually get around to arranging it. The other one is time to go on it, and this is the time that you actually take off and go there. Thirdly is the time to implement it and sensibly have a review every month or something like that and say, well I went on this course and I am still implementing the promises that I made to myself at the end of it, etc. So the three different aspects of time are, as far as arranging it is concerned, there is quite a lot that can be done to improve that. (BL 5)

This manager spoke at length about how time pressures influenced each of these stages. For example as was discussed in the previous section, considering the culture in connection to MD in BL, it was shown that BL 5 was particularly negative about the culture in place. In that section BL 5's comments about there being insufficient will and encouragement on the company's part to make learning and development participation

Appendix Five

easy for managers were reported. For him the issue of actual support from the organisation could also be linked to the time issue, and he stressed that often it was cumbersome and time consuming to actually identify what was appropriate, and that was where the organisation should be more proactive:

The particular thing about arranging training is that I have argued for many years that Borders Lif could very effectively bring in speakers to address groups of managers. There's no reason why we couldn't have one of the guys addressing 30 people here or 80 people here or something like that. In practice people would probably say, I'm too busy to attend this but it's all a question of what sort of encouragement there is to people to attend these. (BL 5)

BL 5 also felt that actually taking the time off to participate in potentially development activities was problematic in itself with the level of work that was expected of him and indeed all managers now. However, the final point he made in relation to how time can affect learning was related to actually following up activities, as his final comments here effectively illustrate:

As far as the follow up is concerned, for me to have any time for that, that's a tough one. That is the killer frankly, because not only have you been out of the office for a day or two, you have got to do a report on what you've done. So you've got extra work to do but you don't have time when you come back into the office to do the report because of all the things you're catching up on which you haven't done in the last two days and are now waiting on you. I suppose the answer to that is to take a morning off or something but that's difficult to do. (BL 5)

For two other managers (BL 1, & 8) there was an obvious concern about the level of stress that was apparent for both themselves and for their colleagues at the present time, and it did not escape them that this also could have an impact on participation in learning. For example BL 1 appeared to be particularly concerned about the level of pressure that was being placed on his younger colleagues, and he worried about how much time they could have for training and learning considering the amount of work they were asked to do:

Interviewer: So when you say about not being healthy, are you talking about stress?

Yes, I think so. I've not had any physical ailments that would suggest that but there have been people in the office that have had that. I think I'm a person with the ability to switch off and deal with stress. We've got a stress help line through the medical PPP that we use and we've got stress management course. But it is a stressful job and I do worry about some of the section managers that I'm in charge of and the pressure that they'd be put under and I think we have to turn that around in the next year or two. (BL 1)

For BL 8, there was also some concern about how work pressures could be impacting on both her and her colleagues' activity. However she felt that the 'Year 2000 Millennium Bug' issue was exacerbating this pressure and was hopeful that in after 2000 there would be some easing of the pressures. The final manager (BL 3) in this 'negative' category felt that it was hard to do more learning outside of work. Effectively he felt that if he were going to do more development it would need to be after work, because actually getting the time to

participate during 'normal working hours' was becoming increasingly difficult due to 'normal work duties'. This manager, along with BL 8 also appeared to have some issues about the fact that a lot of courses and potential activities were outside of Scotland, and he felt that this also led to problems related to finding the time to participate.

b) Managers in neutral category (certain resource issues undermine learning)

For the two managers who were placed in this neutral bracket the major issue that appeared pertinent from their comments was that due to physical time and other pressures present in the organisation in the past there has been a need to withdraw from certain development activities. For instance in the case of BL 4 it was shown that often although he knew it was entirely necessary to go to a conference or similar learning event, there could be a tendency to cancel purely because of the pressures involved. The following sequence of paragraphs from the interview sum up his feeling on the matter:

MM: What are the main personal factors that have inhibited your participation in learning activities?

Workload is probably the principal thing. I am a fan of training, I think it's very important and I'm very keen ... I try and make time for training myself but it's very difficult, particularly because quite a lot of the stuff I'm interested in is not...it's more likely to be attending a conference on something and we're talking a day or two out.

Interviewer: When you do go away, do you think there's support in the office for covering your position?

Well to some extent the constraints are self imposed because nobody would stop me going. But you just sort of ... well with so many pieces of work, you just can't afford to take time out - a number of projects are coming into fruition, there may be some systems testing which I'll have to supervise and signing things there etc. and it's a bad time to go. That's the sort of thing.

Interviewer: Do you find there's increasingly more "bad times" to go?

Yes. I would say that compared with 5 years ago, definitely. It's an increasingly competitive world we live in and we're all trying to do more with less and what tends to give are the discretionary applications of time. (BL 4)

The final point made in the above sequence of conversation is perhaps the most enlightening. Here BL 4 talks about the '*discretionary application of time*' and from his comments it is clear that learning and development would appear to fit into that bracket in this organisation.

For the other manager (BL 7) there was also a realisation that getting the time to continue to develop could be problematic and when asked what he felt were the main inhibitors for him - he '*suspect ed*] it would just be time to devote to it'. In answering this way (suspecting time to be the major barrier) this manager further backed up what had been shown previously about him, in that, he was not particularly interested in further development at this stage. The above comments however were useful in illustrating that

time for this manager could potentially be a problem if he did decide to embark on more development.

c) Managers in positive category (resource issues not a factor for learning)

For the three remaining managers what came to the fore was that although they fully acknowledged the potential problems associated with how time pressures could interfere with their own, and their colleagues, development activities there was some pragmatism about how they could negate these potentially negative effects.

For two of the managers in particular (BL 2 & 7) this pragmatism was particularly prevalent in their comments. For example BL 2 pointed out that even if a conference was based a good distance away from the office, as long as it was identified as being relevant then physical resource issues would simply have to be negotiated:

Interviewer: Would you say it's a barrier for you going to them [if outside Scotland?]

It depends what the conference is about. It tends to be that you've lost another day in the office by travelling the conference lasts 2 or 3 days but we've lost 4 days of the week. But if the conference were important, we'd go anyway. We do not have the cost factor whereby if you've spent £800 to go on a conference, it's used up. (BL 2)

In the case of BL 6 too there was a real reluctance not to cite as a problem in terms of participation. She stated that she had never had the problem of work and training colliding and pointed out that, '*she was] in a very fortunate situation with the boss [she had] that she had never] been put in a situation where it's work or training – [she had] a happy balance of both*'. An important point to note here was that she realised to vital role that here boss played in the process and in determining how much development and training she undertook. However BL 6, although acknowledging that time constraints were genuinely present for some, did fear that amongst some of the younger employees there was as tendency to use time as an excuse and this was again a very serious problem for the organisation:

Interviewer: That's something I was coming on to...what constraints do you feel are present in the organisation against learning?

I'd say it's time mostly but I think with a few of the younger people, a significant minority, they're just not interested and if they can get out of it, they will by hook or by crook, they'd rather not go on a training course, it just does not appeal to them. I think this is because younger folk can't see that it's going to help them get on. (BL 6)

The remaining manager, (BL 9) espoused similar views in that he also saw the potential pressures involved in the organisation in relation to time but he also had quite a pragmatic outlook. In effect he suggested that if he valued a development intervention highly enough, he too would find the time whether that was a part time MBA or other more directly work related interventions.

5.4 Summary and Conclusions

This section summarises the key findings and conclusions in LL in relation to:

- Intrinsic issues
- Extrinsic issues
- Final remarks

A5.4.2 Intrinsic Issues: General Themes and Conclusions

Table A5.1 below illustrates the position of each manager in LL in relation to propensity to learn according to each of the intrinsic factors and learning. The rationale for constructing these tables is discussed in Section 4.3 of Chapter Four. From the table some interesting conclusions can be drawn regarding intrinsic factors and their affects on learning.

Table A5. 1 - Intrinsic Factors and Learning for Managers in Lothian Life

Mgr	Perceptual	Emotional	Motivational	Cognitive (General)	Cognitive (Vocational)	Ratings (Total)
BL1	M	M	M	L	L	8
BL2	L	M	L	H	M	9
BL3	M	L	L	H	M	9
BL4	M	H	M	H	H	13
BL5	M	M	L	H	M	10
BL6	H	M	H	M	M	12
BL7	L	L	L	M	H	8
BL8	M	L	M	H	H	11
BL9	M	L	M	H	M	10
Totals	H=1[11°] M 6[67°] L=2[22°]	H=1 [11°] M 4 [44.5°] L=4 [44.5°]	H=1[11°] M=4[44.5°] L=4[44.5°]	H=6[67°] M=2[22°] L=1[11°]	H=3[23°] M=5[56°] L=1[11°]	

a) Perceptual

- Majority of managers (67°) from all age groups in medium propensity category – unclear about the best opportunities to participate in for further development, work pressures and also hints of plateau for younger manager (highers, aged 38) in group.
- Two managers or 22° in low category because of their apparent complacency (highly qualified (actuarial and ACII qualifications) older managers, not inclined to continue at this stage.
- One manager in high category clearly illustrating her perceived need because of fact that currently undertaking ACII qualification because needs a better understanding of the industry (42 year old female with technical background). The fact that she did not have children also important – time to participate?

b Emotional

- Interesting case for only one manager (11% placed in high category 44 year old CA who because of past emotional event (redundancy) more inclined to participate to ensure it does not happen again.
- Other managers 44.5% each in low and medium groups.
- Low – fears regarding security (not being an actuary in actuary dominated environment); lacked appropriate people skills to move forward at this stage 47 year old female PC development manager); two (50 years old and well qualified) complacent with careers and unlikely to participate at this stage.
- Medium managers (four or 44.5%) – issues with taking part because of technology fears (two actuaries, 38 and 48 years old); job security issues (non-professional qualified in middle of mid career age range).

c) Motivational

- Similar to emotional – only one highly motivated manager with rest in the medium or low categories.
- Medium managers (44.5%) – not specifically insurance qualified (CA, BSc and Highers), but all in pressurised jobs and at career stages where need some direction which appears to have hampered motivation.
- Low managers (44.5%) – older than other groupings and insurance specific qualifications, do not see rewards of further participation at this career stage.

d) Cognitive

- One (11%), 37 year old male manager who left school after Higher Exams in low category for both formal compulsory and work related learning – Implications of poor experience would indicate that barriers to new learning existed
- Most managers (67%) high achievers (two actuaries, CA, two ACII & BSc graduate) in terms of school and university.
- Two medium managers (22%) – experiences not as good, undergraduate drop out for one OU mature graduate) and disillusionment with theoretical aspects of college.
- Work related learning - majority (56%) in medium category with similar issues as other organisation managers regarding correspondence courses and MD impracticality.

- One third or 33% older managers positive about vocational learning especially highly participative and professionally taught courses. All highly qualified (CA, ACII & Post graduate).

A5.4.3 Extrinsic Issues: General Themes and Conclusions

Table A5.2 illustrates the aggregate findings relating to the extrinsic factors influencing participation in learning. This table enables some interesting conclusions to be drawn regarding extrinsic factors and their influence on learning for the managers interviewed in CL. Each barrier is now discussed in turn in order to extract the main points of interest from the interviews:

Table A5. 2 - Extrinsic Factors and Learning for Managers in Borders Life

Mgr	Organisational Culture	MD Culture	Physical Resources	Ratings (Total)
BL1	+		-	5
BL2	\	\	+	7
BL3	-	-	-	3
BL4	\			5
BL5	-	-	-	3
BL6	+		+	8
BL7	+	+	\	8
BL8	-	-	-	3
BL9	-		+	5
Totals	+ = 3[33 %] = 2[23 %] = 4[44 %]	+ = 1[11 %] = 3[33 %] = 5[56 %]	+ = 3[33 %] = 2[23 %] = 4[44 %]	

a) Organisational Culture

- Change in culture not mentioned as often as in other companies but similar issues present.
- The majority (67%) either displayed their outright negativity towards the culture or at least some concern about certain elements of it.
- Negative four managers (44%) – two conflicting views explaining negativity: Firstly (two IS managers) company culture now characterised by too much emphasis on cost controlling, and less staff loyalty. Secondly, (two older long serving managers) critical of senior managers who need to be more proactive in engendering learning in BL.
- Neutral managers 23% – more appreciative of attempts to change culture for better but certain outdated practices still remain and this caused confusion (both professionally qualified

- Positive managers (33 %) Reluctant to criticise culture, felt organisation was an enjoyable place to work (good communication and atmosphere).

b MD Culture

- Only one manager (11% of sample positive about MD Culture as the oldest manager in the sample who had moved to life assurance after a teaching career he felt that if you wanted to learn there was little to stop you, and learning apparent amongst younger managers.
- Rest of sample (8 managers or 91%) were either neutral or negative about MD Culture.
- Negative managers (56%) – issues surrounding support from colleagues (many poor people skills and many who viewed training as a holiday), and senior managers (not committed enough). These managers had worked for BL either all their careers or for considerable periods (good knowledge of culture).
- Neutral managers (3 or 33%) – learning culture apparent but not amongst the middle/senior ranks, more apparent at lower levels. These three managers in middle of mid career age range, (38, 42 and 44 years), professionally qualified (or studying for qualification).

c) Physical Resource issues

- All managers mentioned the part that time pressures played in determining participation in learning, but as figures from Table A5.2 illustrate; there were differing opinions.
- Majority (67%) either neutral or negative re affects, but still one third in positive category.
- Three positive managers (33%) – if learning important then time not the issue identifying correct activities main issue ; also if line managers supportive, time pressures not such a factor (relatively young managers, 35, 38 & 42).
- Two neutral managers (23%), older professionals with dependant children time pressures an annoyance, worry in training and learning time becoming discretionary.
- Negative managers (4 or 44 %) – felt that time constraints (organising, participating and following up) were the number one issues impacting on participating in learning activities. These (mostly older managers noticed side effects in stress levels rising amongst colleagues.

A5.4 4 Final remarks

From the two tables above (Tables A5.1 and A5.2) it can be observed the two managers who appeared to have particularly low propensity to learn were BL 1 and BL 7.

Across the five factors BL 1 was never included in the high propensity category after analysis of his interview comments. This 37-year-old manager who had entered BL after leaving school, which was not a pleasant experience, unlike other managers in the cohort had not undertaken professional qualifications. In his interview what appeared to be his biggest barrier to learning was his lack of understanding about career direction and exactly what learning might be best for him to achieve further career progression. In terms of the extrinsic factors this manager was also very negative about the culture in BL in relation to MD (support and structure) and also the effects of physical resource issues for participation. However he was positive about the culture in more general terms but admitted that he did not know any other, and that essentially the company had been good.

For BL 7, a range of different issues came to the fore. As the oldest manager in the grouping he clearly displayed the signs that he was now at the stage in his career where further learning and development were not high on his list of priorities. As a professional qualified ACII (fellowship) IS Strategy manager he appeared to be contented and complacent about his future career and was not particularly motivated to pursue more learning. In terms of extrinsic issues it was interesting to note that BL 7 was very positive about both the organisational culture per se and more specifically in relation to MD. He was of the opinion that if he wanted to participate in learning nothing would particularly prevent him, although getting the time could be an annoyance.

In relation to interesting cases, BL 4 (a 44 year old CA) had the highest 'score' (13) in relation to intrinsic issues. Perhaps the most interesting feature of this managers interview was his pragmatism surrounding learning participation where after been made redundant in the past he was now conscious of the need to ensure that he was continually learning and developing.

In relation to extrinsic issues the fact that three managers, BL 3, 5 and 8 were rated as being negative about culture, MD culture and physical resource issues was interesting. These managers were all in the upper quartile in relation to the mid career sample (47, 48 and 50 years old). They were well educated and although they had experienced long service in the organisation they were particularly scathing of its culture and the top management. They felt that they did nothing to enhance learning, especially for mid career managers and ultimately were too interested in cost issues to change their strategy.

Table A5.3 Borders Life Manager Profiles

	BL 1	BL 2	BL 3	BL 4	BL 5
Age	37	38	50	44	48
Sex	M	M	M	M	M
Marital status	Single	Married	Married	Married	Married
Spouse	NA	City councillor	Part time pharmacy dispenser	Nurse by training but selling houses at present	Teacher
Quals.	Highers	Actuary	ACII or IPD	CA	Actuary
Children	NA	3	2	3	3
Age/School Stage of children	NA	11, 9, 7	24, 21	8, 6, 2	10, 14, 16
Parents occupation	F – Semi retired University lecturer M – Social worker	F – Teacher M – Housewife	F – Wire-worker M Administrator	F – Civil Servant M Housewife	F – Civil Engineer M – Pharmacist
Org title	Individual Renewal Department Manager	Financial Control Actuary	Personnel Planning Manager	Manager - Controls	Project Actuary
Career history	BL for 19 years	BL all career	BL since 1969	Various	Worked for GL
Distance from office	3 miles – 20 25 mins car or bicycle	3 miles – 20 mins drive	15 miles away	20 mins away	6 miles through town, 12 miles by pass
Hobbies and Pastimes	Drummer, play in band, squash, qualified scuba diver	Playing Football	Shooting, snooker and stamp collecting	Squash	Caravanning and golf

	BL6	BL7	BL8	BL9	BL10
Age	42	50	47	35	45
Sex	F	M	F	M	M
Marital status	Married	Married	Single	Single	Married
Spouse	Teacher	Day Centre Manager – Social work department	NA	NA	Teacher
Quals.	BSc Science	ACII – (Fellow)	Higher Diploma in Computer Studies	BSc Applicable Maths	ACII
Children	No	2	NA	NA	1
Age/School Stage of children	NA	18, 20 (FT Students)	NA	NA	7
Parents occupation	F – Police Inspector M – Teachers' auxiliary	F – miner M – Housewife	F – Excavator driver M – Housewife	F – Solicitor M – Housewife	F – Manual worker (BP) M – Shop Assistant
Org title	Group Facilities Project Manager	IS Strategy Manager	PC Development Manager	Process Support Manager	Project Manager
Career history	TSB, National Health Service	Teacher for 5 years	Edinburgh University – Researcher on Breast Cancer	BL – all career	BL – all career
Distance from office	3 miles – 30 – 35 mins drive	7 – miles, 15 20 mins drive	40 mins drive	0.5 mile – 10 mins drive	20-25 mins drive
Hobbies and pastimes	Swimming, Activity Centre, Eating	Sports, golf, cricket, badminton	Volleyball, swimming, jogging, skiing	Keeping fit, martial arts, cricket (Hon Secretary of local club), music (play piano) and art.	Indoor Football, Gardening.

Tables A5.4-A5.11 – Borders Life Tables Illustrating Evidence from Informants
Table A5.4 Perceptual issues and Prospects for Participation in Learning amongst BL Informants

	Low	Medium	High
BL1		Manager who has come into the company at a fairly young age worked his way through to managerial level. Has reached the level in this department where he can not move any further. real actual requirements further up. Sees the need of learning, but not really in this department for him – needs to think about his next career move [16,24]	
BL2	Complacent actuary in a managerial job but no desire to make executive level. fairly happy with it. he is in his career – mentions money as a chief motivator and as long as that is ok is happy enough. Nothing to really indicate that he is particularly keen on more learning or development [21,22,35]		
BL3		At this late stage in his career there is realistically little chance of him moving further in the organisation as a non graduate. Not necessarily anti learning – feels that there could be a need for it – but at this stage it is not probably going to happen. resigned himself to that fact [11]	
BL4		Describes himself as an enthusiast of learning and development – would appear to be some desire there to participate – maybe tempered by a number of things – including cost ‘have to win lottery to do MBA full time’ time issues in job and home, desire to continue. [3,6,8]	
BL5		Manager who certainly sees the need to continue to keep learning but there is a perception of ‘what am I going to do that’s different?’ Feels that he has been on all the IMS courses etc. so needs to think more closely about the benefits of it all [2]	
BL6		Thought about doing an MBA – but thought it was infeasible [5]	High desire and recognises the need to continue developing in turbulent environment. Currently doing the ACII exams to get to grips with the other aspects of the organisation that she does not fully appreciate [9]
BL7	Not really promoting learning and development (certainly more formal) types to a very high level. Thinks that at this stage in his career if going to do anything he would do it for himself. Quite an apathetic stage reached where he does not see much value of continuing training at this career stage [5,9,11,14]		
BL8		Realisation of need to participate more – especially as IT is moving so rapidly. But gives some examples where courses have been cancelled as a result of the pressures at work – desire has been tempered because of the pressures – would not want to have to go home and study at night after work [17,22]	
BL9		Desire tempered by the amount of input needed for success in a MBA. Part of the reason for dropping out of the ACII exams wanted to ‘lead a full life’ so idea of studying more not most appealing, but realises may have to change [4]	

Table A5.5 Emotional factors and prospects for participation in learning amongst BL Informants

	Low	Medium	High
BL1		Hints that emotional barriers to learning are emerging because worried about the future direction of his career – maybe a problem in knowing what is the best way of developing career now [16,24]. Elements of the pressure that is around at the moment emerging too for this manager – though would not admit to that [31].	
BL2		Certain emotion issues with technology – may put off certain learning events [1]. In terms of other issues confident in his skills and realises that, as an actuary has no problems in finding employment [21].	
BL3	Feels that he does not really have career development opportunities now at this stage – but does not seem to be particularly negative about that and if anything feels that he has done well to get to where he has as a non graduate. [11]		
BL4			Has had a traumatic event taking place in being made redundant but again this has refocused his attention and made him more aware of the need to continuing to develop – so has almost been like a spur into action to make sure it doesn't happen again [6]
BL5		Again similar to BL2 in that he has some issues as someone from the generation where IT was not so prevalent and therefore feels that he has some problems in certain areas of his work – project management for example. Knows that he needs to work on it – but again is influenced by the 'fiendish' pressure that he is under to perform. [27]	
BL6		Realises the need in increasingly turbulent times to continue to learn and develop [9]. Mentions other fairly important emotional problems here as well which are related to the embarrassment that may be experienced in learning events. Feeling silly or getting things wrong have the tendency 'show her inadequacies' and she gets 'downhearted', so exposure in front of colleagues is something that puts her off [14]	
BL7	The most significant aspect found here – feeling would be that as you move up the management grades you are learning and becoming more secure and valuable. No real problems with the fact that he might not make it all the way – as long as doing a decent job [19]		
BL8	Negative about the training and development that she has had in relation to management skills. One of her regrets is that she has not developed those skills well enough and a lot of the time has been left to stumble along with it. [47 49]		
BL9	Emotional factors raised about the embarrassment that can arise if you stand up in front of people, especially those in the department who you know and the potential to make a fool of yourself. Main thing to arise here is that he would rather be in that situation with people he didn't know than the department [8,9]. Also raises the issue of stress where he observes that you would never admit to being stressed, even though you are [43]		

Table A5.6 Motivational factors and prospects for participation in learning amongst BL Informants

	Low	Medium	High
BL1		Motivation may be constrained to some point by the fact that he really thinks he knows enough about the area that he is in at the moment and therefore learning may not be so relevant if he were to stay in that particular position. However if he were to move then that would undoubtedly involve retraining [16] and he appears to understand this and be willing to make the changes [24]	
BL2	Motivation to continue and do an MBA or similar qualification now is constrained because of the 'long years without a break', really wants to take stock now and think about career consolidation his actuarial exams		
BL3	Low motivation here to take on anything particularly big in terms of learning. Feel that his career is finished in terms of movement but still some desire to stay updated to be able to carry out the job effectively [3]		
BL4		Manager who would appear to be quite motivated to continue to develop but there are constraints linked to the costs that an MBA (have to done FT for success and supply the logistical factors in terms of time off and coming back to work. [6]	
BL5	Does feel that there is not the incentive to continue developing like there was when a young manager. Now a case of doing it for yourself and not the company and therefore you would really need to want to do it [5,20,22] He knows there are certain things he needs to learn more about (Project management packages etc but you get to a stage where you can get your staff to do it for you therefore there is little incentive to learn these either [27]		
BL6			Motivated manager in the midst of the ACII by correspondence where she knows to continue in this industry because she is not from this background has to get more informed of the pensions, and life insurance side of things [9]
BL7	Realises he could be more proactive in terms of learning and development - computer languages etc but finds that after working with systems all day would not really want to do that [11] Also has the opinion that a lot of the management skills that he requires are learnt best through experience and not through courses so no real incentive to develop in that way either [13]		
BL8		Manager who is clearly primarily motivated by the needs of the job, to keep up to date with IT developments is expected of her and she knows that. However motivation to actually go and do something more developmental is harder to find for at the present time [17 23]	
BL9		After not completing ACII course there was a period of not really wanting to do anything more. But feels he is much more motivated now to study for an MBA for example, but there is a constraining factor there, in that he knows to succeed the course will have to be done on a full time basis. He does not know about how the company would react to a sabbatical [4]	

Table A5.7 Cognitive issues and prospects for participation in learning amongst BL Informants (General)

	Low	Medium	High
BL1	Final years at school were described as being a 'wash out' where the 'relaxed regime' of education did not help him. Was going to go to Aberdeen University but did not get a place in hindsight feels that this was probably a good thing because he may not have done so well knowing what people do at university' – needed to settle down to a job. [3]		
BL2			No issues about the compulsory and formal education for this manager. Did not appear to affect decisions with regards to going on and doing actual examinations. [1]
BL3			Left school after higher to come into insurance company good experience and no issues regarding compulsory education [1]
BL4			Similar to BL2 no real issue emerging went on to do CA examinations [1]
BL5			Again similar to above BL2 – very accomplished formal educational career where both Highers and A Levels were completed and a 2:1 was achieved at university in Mathematics [1]
BL6		Had a fairly standard education in terms of school and then university, but it was here where she actually failed her first examination and admits that it 'came as a shock in terms of what you had to do compared to school'. Generally it was here that she began to wonder when all this learning would be 'mobilised' – a theme that has continued throughout her experience of learning. [2]	
BL7		Certain regrets mentioned here regarding failure to complete his 1 st University degree. In hindsight wishes he had of done that because had to in the end go back and do a correspondence course at the OU, which he found difficult because he was working by then and the obvious difficulties of combining the two. Has had some effect on further decisions – see below. [1,2]	
BL8			Nothing really standing out about this manager – not as classical as the others in this group – left school and into a job with the civil service then made the decision to go back to University to do computer studies and business languages and then went into a computing career [1]
BL9			Again nothing standing out in terms of the formal educational aspects of the career. School then university to study mathematics and then to the Insurance industry as a graduate trainee [1]

Table A5.8 Cognitive issues and prospects for participation in learning amongst BL Informants (Vocational activities)

	Low	Medium	High
BL1	Issues with the actual usefulness of some of the training and development experienced. Connected primarily to the value of the actual trainers themselves and also to the chance to get putting what has been learnt into practice, when he feels he has 'gone through the pain of learning it the hard way' anyway. [14,15]		
BL2		Fairly sceptical about the actual value of some of the MD that he has taken part in throughout the years. Cynicism traced back to HW course tutors in actual studies described as 'dubious' [3,4,12]	
BL3		Manager who has had 'knock backs' as he would call them related primarily to the support that was forthcoming for him to actually go out and do professional exams. He wanted to do them fairly early on in career – but had to wait until in mid forties to do the IPD course because he had little support in early years. However this shows that he did still have the desire to get the qualification – would probably not need to do any more now though. [2,3]	
BL4			It would appear that his positive experience of doing the classroom based learning CA qualification has affected further decisions about what is the best way to approach formal education now. Really feels that if to do an MBA – would have to be full time and way from distractions 'because of the discipline of a more formal environment' [6]
BL5		Although he maintains that the fact that he felt the correspondence course to gain the actual qualification was a 'nasty experience' (structure, tutors – part-timers etc) he feels that it would not colour his opinion about undertaking CC type learning again. However he does make the point that he would have to be reassured that any course of study was well structured and properly supported. Feels that doing an MBA would be tough because of the pressures. [4,5]	
BL6		Some issues with the actual translation of learning into something really useful – 'mobilising' the knowledge. Some issues about the type of learning she needs for her job. Even when its delivered through a more user friendly media like CBT she often finds it a 'complete drag', 'terribly dry' and written in jargon and wording that is so unappealing it gives me no pleasure [17]	
BL7			Not really had too many bad experiences of more work related learning, finding correspondence courses and evening classes 'not too bad'. If anything has coloured his decisions about further learning – more classrooms based learning where the tutors were professional and you had some interaction [3,4,5]
BL8			No real experiences of work related training or learning that would colour her views on participation, except she feels if you go on a course there needs to be the opportunity to use the skills immediately afterwards in work environment. [11,12]
BL9		Only major thing - dropped out of the ACII before actually finishing them – because he felt would not provide 'massive benefit to my career'. Maybe has coloured view to some extent because was thinking of doing an MBA by CC – decided against, although may do in the future.	

Table A5.9 Organisational cultural issues (Culture of organisation and industry): Impact on learning in BL

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
BL1			Generally feels that he is institutionalised in the fact that he has never worked anywhere else and therefore does not know what other cultures are like. From the comments of others that have come in he thinks it must not be bad and in generally he feels is that it is generally good. 'Very friendly, open, want to hear what you've got to say, communicative ideas upwards and downwards and sideways'. If there is a hindrance he puts it down to personalities at certain levels doing certain things against that culture. [32]
BL2		As far as this manager is concerned the culture is as he describes it 'fair and ok for the whole lot of us'. If there are problems they are related to the passing of information down the line – although there are good intentions there. Another factor that is perhaps slightly negative is that the company is 'area-based' in that departments seem to get on with it themselves. A specific problem is the number of 'contractors' in IT, which means it is not an ideal culture. [26]	
BL3	Quite negative about the culture of the company – especially in relation to MD where he feels that the top executive are not really very supportive of it and therefore it is this culture that is the main barrier to learning. [15]		
BL4		Culture, which he feels, is in 'transition', where the best way to describe what it was like in the past was a 'civil service sort of attitudes, particularly at middle management level'. In essence thinks that the top management team does have the right idea, and more sensitive and realistic management styles are apparent. A problem though would appear to be related to those people with the 'it's not my problem ... hang your brain on the hook when you come in' attitude that hinders the culture. [31, 33]	
BL5	Similar attitude towards the culture as BL3 where he feels that there are deficiencies in terms of the top managers particularly in the messages that they send out in relation to training or development – should be more serious about it all [17-23]. Also feel that there are many opportunities for 'networking' that are lost in the organisation.		
BL6			Manager who has been with the company for eight years and certainly has noticed the changes in the culture, where it has gone a lot tighter in terms of costs etc. She feels that this was something that was necessary for the future as it has grown, still the good elements of paternalism and in terms of pay and conditions feels that it could not be matched. [30,31]

BL7			<p>Culture has changed and manager would appear to feel that the good elements from the previous culture have been retained in that the place is still friendly and the chief executive is not too offish</p> <p>Also believes that the culture of longer hours is not here to the same extent as other offices executives are looking for a fair day's work from everyone and they are rewarded accordingly 2</p>
BL8	<p>Very negative about the culture and feels unreservedly that it is changing for the worse where there are now successful businessmen who are running the company who are not concerned about anything else but profits and are self-centred. Feels that this attitude has permeated down to the lower levels and hence 'everyone's looking out for themselves' [43-45]</p>		
BL9	<p>Appears to feel that the culture of the company has changed for the worse there is now more thought given to the costs angle than to the people. Certain staff have left who you could trust and now you simply know the people who are close to you in the department so this is a bad situation for there is again not the loyalty that there was [30-35]</p>		

Table A5.10 MD Culture issues (Opportunities learning climate in organisation): Impact on learning in BL

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
BL1	<p>Fairly negative about the MD culture in place in the company, needs to be much more than a 5 minute pause left at end of appraisal for development issues Little structure or support and in the past when a training course has been asked for there have been delays which meant that it has been useless when the time has come [14,37]. Another feature here is that often you don't want to 'step out' and be too proactive in training when everyone else in the company is so busy [19]</p>		
BL2		<p>Culture has improved over the 10 years that he has been here and there is a lot more opportunity in the organisation to take part in things However what is really apparent is that it is primarily at the lower levels that the real learning is taking place and the really ambitious 'next top people' are, whereas there is a big bit in the middle – the senior managers – who are missed out' [11,31,32]</p>	
BL3	<p>Fairly negative as was shown above about the learning culture in place feels that there could be much more encouragement for learning here to the extent that he would classify BL as being 'in terms of other offices at the bottom of the scale'. Although also does realise the importance of self development and the fact that it is primarily up to him to ensure that he develops [6,7,8,13] Another point made in terms of support and structures in that flying off to Paris, Rome or Brussels is viewed as 'something that is not quite what you should be doing' [9]</p>		
BL4		<p>MD Culture has changed from the civil service model where training 'had nothing to do with work' and it was viewed as an extra holiday The real problem now is not the opportunities as he sees it but the time constraints again where it is very difficult to leave the office with the knowledge that the in tray is building up in your absence. So improving but certainly not perfect – more could be done to alleviate the time issues [34]</p>	
BL5	<p>Negative about the training and development environment feels that there could be much more done in getting people together for events that would help networking as well Also if senior management were more prepared to participate in the flesh then they would send a very powerful message about the importance of training but ultimately this does not happen [17,21,23,24]</p>		
BL6		<p>MD culture is getting better but there should be a much more instrumental feel to the whole thing where peoples needs are identified and they are sent on the most appropriate training and development activities not just for the sake of it [34,35,43]</p>	
BL7			<p>Positive in that if you really want to go on something then it would not be stopped and he has never experienced anything Problem here is that this manager may have a slightly lower expectation about what a real learning culture should be talks about only allowing people go on one course per year [28,2]</p>

BL8	Describes the training and development culture as being 'garbage' – feels that there are an awful lot of 'bad managers' in BL – see BL4 for similar reference to managers in BL. She would trace this directly back to the fact that they have had very little managerial training and they are thrown in and expected to manage a team of people, which is the most difficult thing to do [46-50]		
BL9	A lot of people here who feel that they do not need to learn and there is therefore little real support for it at certain levels. Not changed that much and a real test of how far the MD culture would have gone would be if they let him do an MBA full time. Doubts if that would happen [23,36]. Also on the support issue from colleagues would argue that if you were away on something very developmental like an OB course, the view would be that you are 'away on holiday' [41]. Also sees a real failing in that there is little structure and he certainly does not get the impression that they are trying to develop him [41-45]		

Table A5.11 Physical Resource Issues (Time, place, costs): Impact on learning in BL

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
BL1	Generally it would appear that there is the potential for physical pressures to make an impact on the learning and development activities for this manager speaks of getting 'whisked away' from activities. Also talks of the problems associated with stress which he is more worried about for younger managers who are piled with pressure right from early on in their careers [19,25,26]		
BL2			Nothing here to really suggest that at this manager is only affected by the physical pressures that are apparent in the industry at present. Doesn't really cite time difficulty as a problem but does realise that there is a cost element in going to conferences not located closer than England however if a conference was really important would go anywhere [19]
BL3	The problem of doing this in addition to normal working duties is mentioned here. All other problems of location of events where a lot are based in London or abroad as point was made before not really in the company's nature to send people to a lot of these events [9]		
BL4		Has not succeeded recently to go to the usual events that he would normally go on because of the time issues. Also knows that with family and other work commitments there would be danger if anything like an MBA were not done in the disciplined environment of the classroom [13,20,34]	
BL5	As was shown before the idea of doing an MBA did not get off the ground due to the fact that there were work and family commitments and the realisation that with the amount of effort it was not going to be feasible [5]. Basically feels that learning is 'squeezed terribly by time' and essentially that is what sums up the problems with him and learning participation [8,9,10,15]		
BL6			Feels that physical pressure and time for example are not really major constraints for her personally. Essence of her statements suggest that she thinks that younger people may use time as an excuse not to go or alternatively should see that some who are under pressure may use training as a reality, but for her personally isn't something she has found restrictive [15,24,26,3]
BL7		Can see how time could be a problem in that you have to spend time with family and with work etc. However would appear to be more concerned with other resources – actually having enough people in his IS department – essentially the main thing here for this manager is his low desire to continue in any case [7,11,17,30]	
BL8	Physical effects of having to cancel going on courses because of work related to the pressures of year 2000 work [13,16]. Feels that Scotland is certainly behind England in terms of provision for the opportunities that she would want to go on [27,28,37]		
BL9			Sees the potential problem of pressure feeling if she made the decision to go and take on an MBA would be that the regard of pressure [4,24,38]

APPENDIX SIX

Highland Life

Highland Life, since its inception in the early part of the 19th Century, has grown to be one of the world's leading financial services institutions. Operating over a wide range of countries, the company offers a range of Life Assurance, Pensions and Investment products to over four million people in the UK alone.

With the Head Office based in a newly purpose-built headquarters in the city centre of Edinburgh, the company employs over 7000 individuals of which around 5000 are distributed across 15 sites in the city (the other 2000 are located in the branch network nation-wide). As an indication of its size, Highland Life boasted over £60 billion funds under management at the point of data collection, making it the largest mutual Life Assurance Company in the European Community.

In terms of achievements, the company has consistently gained Triple A ratings by the awarding bodies, Moody's and, Standard & Poor's for financial strength. The company have enjoyed success at the Money Marketing Awards 1997 and the Financial Adviser Service Awards 1997 and were voted the PIMS Company of the Year by Independent Financial Advisers for the three years leading up to the point of data collection.

Recent initiatives include the launch of a banking division and a dedicated Investment Management Division. In comparison with the other companies in the study, the sheer size of Highland Life appears to have provided some insulation against the threat of take-over and merger from larger Financial Services organisations or from speculative policyholders keen to bring about a de mutualisation.

A6.1 Organisational Context

In an interview with the manager responsible for Management Development (MD Consultant), questions on a number of issues were posed to gain an insight into the organisational context. The below paragraphs summarise the key points of this interview. However more detailed information on the company context is contained in Appendix Seven.

- HL is the largest mutual life assurance organisation in Europe.
- Organisation based on a divisional structure; Customer Services; Sales; Information Systems and, Investment.
- The Executive is responsible for setting strategy for the company, which is communicated to the rest of the company's employees through various departmental

and team meetings. Other features of the communication system are the Company Newsletters and the Employee Conferences.

- Official attempts to change the culture of HL based on a better customer orientation through the Total Customer Satisfaction (TCS) initiative. As part of this initiative all staff from Chief Executive down to the most junior members have been required to attend compulsory training days organised by the People Development department.
- MD Consultant stated that there was a 'strong learning culture' present, but alongside that there were clearly a degree of conservatism in the culture too.
- Connected to above she felt there was little real experimentation and, only very cautious use of empowerment (staff would not be allowed to administer pensions if they were not fully trained), but more recently the brightest graduates have been getting promoted earlier.
- Ultimately it was felt that responsibility for MD lies firmly with the individual, but the company also had a role to play (providing opportunities and support for learning).
- IiP status has been retained, illustrating the strong ethos of learning and development present. Also HL was awarded a prize from Cranfield School of Management for its MD practices.
- Competency frameworks are used for all staff - based on nine key competencies. This competency framework is used to determine the amount of training and development, which an individual receives for the year.
- The rewards that an individual receives are determined at their annual appraisal meeting. There are no cash bonuses given for passing an examination, but in theory this should help one achieve competence objectives and therefore contribute to final remuneration.

A6.2 Intrinsic issues and learning

As has been the case with the previous four appendices the findings from the interviews, with the eleven mid-career managers in HL are presented in the next two main sections. In the section immediately proceeding issues connected to participation in learning related to the managers' intrinsic attitudes, behaviour and experiences are discussed. In Section A6.3 extrinsic issues which may affect participation, for example as a result of the culture in place in HL are examined.

A6 2.1 Perceived need for participation - Perceptual*a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)*

Table A6.4 summarises the situation regarding perceptual issues and learning in HL. As can be seen from this table it was found that three managers in particular were felt to display a 'low' likelihood of continuing to participate in learning and development. Seemingly for these managers, further involvement in learning simply did not appear to be overtly high on their agendas at this particular point in their careers.

In essence what was key to all these managers was an emphasis on really practical and in the main informal development. In their responses there was a reluctance to consider more formal development. On one level two managers (HL 1 & 6) in particular from the three felt that the whole of their careers had been based on experiential learning and this had served them well to this point in their careers. For example HL 1 illustrated his non-interest by stating that: *'the whole environment is about knowledge, but that would get the department nowhere if that was all that happened. So you need people like [him] who know all the stuff and know how to apply it'*.

In a similar vein, HL 6 illustrated in his comments that more formal learning was not really required. He felt that as someone with over 30 years service in the company he understood the organisational culture and how to work within the company and his career in the main had been satisfactory up until this point:

I'm a manager senior managers are a couple of grades higher than me, I'd be quite happy as long as I'm allowed to keep managing staff at this level. When I look at the senior managers, I see them as fairly young people and I don't see much progression. I'm now in the 30th year in the company but most of these guys are management graduates, ... and you do worry when you see them coming in, they're going to get all the management posts but I found, working with these people, that it isn't worth the worry. They are exactly the same as you are - OK they've got their degrees and things like that but you've got the experience, you've got the company culture. (HL 6)

An important element in HL 6s comments was related to the likelihood of him getting more promotion in the organisation. As can be appreciated the limited prospects of movement further up the hierarchy did not overtly concern this manager. However for HL 4, this lack of promotion was a worry and did appear to influence his perceived need for further development activity:

.. I've been here a long time and I know a lot of people around here, and I know a lot of people my age and I feel that once you're getting towards the 5 mark, that things are getting to be a bit harder for you. ... I don't really think it matters how you perform in the past or what you do in the present What Highland's doing is changing the management - they've got a reasonable amount of management trainees and we have got to make space for them. (HL 4)

An additional element, which HL communicated was that often even when he did participate in further learning activities they often appeared to be not very relevant for him at this stage in his career. For example he stated that recently even more informal activities like conferences or seminars have not been particularly valuable finding that *'without trying to sound too smart, a lot of the things at these conferences, [he was pretty much aware of - the basics, so he didn't tend to go for them a lot of the time']*.

b) Managers in medium category (some prospects of participation)

Four managers from HL were placed in the 'medium' category. Although they appeared to fully understand the need to continue to develop, certain issues showed that in practice they might have difficulties in pursuing further activities. Specifically for two managers (HL 2 & HL 8), with already highly demanding jobs or active family lives there was reluctance to give up any more precious time for company assignments. Ultimately for HL 2 there appeared to be some contentment about her current position and a distinct feeling that perhaps too much personal sacrifice would have to be made if she was to move further:

I'm at the level just below an assistant general manager and the next level up...well, I seem to be doing well where I am, and I'm getting high performance awards and good bonuses. I would imagine that if you put all our senior managers together, I'm in the end that's got the good ones and I'm happy to be in that end. The next level up has a lot of social responsibilities as well, you're much more of a company representative. ... I've got two small children and I'm not willing to give up any more of my private time. I work 'til 6:30 most nights, so I'm not home 'til 7pm and almost every night I take a half to an hour work home and do a couple of hours at the weekend - that's enough. I'm not adding to that by having 2 or 3 hours a week socialising on behalf of the company. (HL 2)

Similarly HL8 communicated that he was at the end of the second year of a potential three-year MBA course, but was unsure if he would finish the course. He stated that there was considerable pressure in his current role and although continuing to develop and perform his role well was a goal, there was apprehension that after an MBA a vertical move towards the Executive level would be possible, but that would mean even more pressure:

You can't avoid the fact that, in the current job market, you want to have as great a breadth of marketable skills as possible because that makes me internally marketable too. ... I don't for example see myself going into executive management, I don't particularly want to at this stage.

Interviewer: Is that because of pressures on the job?

Yes, it's a combination of pressures of the lifestyle and not being something I want to do. I'm married without children and my wife has a good job so money's not particularly my main motivation. I like a job that is professionally challenging and interesting, not something that runs your whole life - it's getting that balance where you still have a life as well as your career.

Interviewer: Do you feel that, further up the executive ladder, your career becomes your life?

I think it becomes that way, yes. I already notice it having come this far, as it were. I think it depends because some executives are so smart and so well organised that they can still have a life (HL 8)

The main theme that connected the other two managers (HL 3 & 5) in this 'medium' category was related to what they felt was the best way for them to continue to develop and progress in their present roles and ultimately in their careers in general. These managers clearly saw the need to continue to progress but did not really feel that conventional development was terribly relevant at this career stage. For example in the case of HL 3, (who was clearly very ambitious) when asked how important he felt learning and development were for him personally at this stage he intimated that:

It depends - I wouldn't want to say that it is crucial, I don't know what my next move is going to be but certainly the last 4 years I have had to learn to do the job and to build up experience. So I have made sure that I have been reading the articles and keeping up to date. (HL 3)

In further comments HL 3 revealed that in the role that he was currently performing the most valuable form of development he could get at this stage was exposure to good managers. Closely related to HL 3's observations were those of HL 5 whose main goal was to continue with his job and consequently he did not appear to see learning and development as being the most important priority for him at this stage.

I'm interested in doing good projects and I want to make sure we plan ahead and do good projects. At the end of the day, I want to walk away and look back on projects I can be proud of, rather than saying, well, I pegged up to it [the bureaucracy]. You know being a Senior Manager of that corporation, I'm not particularly interested in that. (HL 5)

c) Managers in high category (good prospects of participation)

The remaining four managers (HL 7, 9, 10 & 11) were located in the 'high' category because their comments showed how highly they perceived the need to continue to participate in learning. Each of the four illustrated a clear desire to continue to develop in any way appropriate.

The central theme to arise from the comments expressed by these four managers was that they had a real desire to prevent their careers stalling at this point and were keen to ensure that movement of one kind was promoted, whether that be upward or lateral movement or simply general career development. For example HL 7 who had recently returned from maternity leave typified the attitude that one must continue to develop:

Interviewer: Really just the last thing on this - how do you see your career developing in say 2, 5 or even 10 years time?
I would like if I get the opportunity to learn about the new technology on the client server. ... I would like to develop more rather than just stagnate. I have been in the one department now for ten years and I think it is now changing a bit. So I think you need to have a challenge so that you are motivated. HL 7)

For managers HL 9, 10 and 11, the main focus of their attention was to remain employable. Therefore they accepted learning and development as something that would be essential for them to continue with if they were to remain attractive to employers. For example HL9 suggested that he was attracted to the '*content of the MBA because he thought it*

was a good way of broadening your business knowledge and also, getting out with your own company because he thought you quite quickly become insular... [an MBA] shakes you up a bit, challenges your assumptions'. HL 9 also showed that he was very realistic about the realities of current managerial careers and hence was quite prepared to accept more horizontal moves in the organisation because he knew that there was still plenty to learn in any new role.

In a similar vein HL 10 also showed his willingness to continue to develop and participate appropriately in order to further enhance his skills and ultimately his career. In effect it was shown that his desires were as much based on the desire to acquire some expertise in a specific area:

I would like to become better at what I currently do. I do quite a lot of work into the area of Management Development and I feel that there is still quite a lot more there I can learn. ... I would like to be regarded as having an expertise in that area and that is a target if you like. ... I suspect that there will be further re-organisations [in HL] so it is difficult to know, I suppose there is another driver in if you want to remain employable you have got to develop. (HL 10)

A6.2.2 Fears or Insecurities surrounding Learning Participation - Emotional

a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

Table A6.5 illustrates the position of the eleven managers in relation to emotional issues. Only one manager in HL was felt to forward comments illustrating certain fears and insecurities surrounding the future which could affect participation in more learning opportunities.

As has already been discussed above in Section A6.2.1, this manager, HL 4, was placed in the low category when perceptual issues were explored in this case organisation. The main focus of HL 4's comments in that section was related to his perception that there would not be much opportunity for him at this stage of his career for advancement. What was interesting in relation to emotional barriers to learning though, were the additional remarks made surrounding this issue of future career progression which indicated that he had some bitterness towards how he had been treated by the company:

Interviewer: In terms of you personally, this is really the last question in this section, how do you see you career progressing in the next 2, 5 or 10 years?

Well you've hit a bit of a sore spot there, I feel that at the moment, and this has been denied, that Highland is practising are a bit of ageism now. Now, I'm getting on a bit now, and I'm getting to that age where I think what they're doing - and I'm not saying that it's wrong, but I do feel they should come clean about it, this is one of my big problem areas, and I do ask them and they say no. (HL 4)

If one considers these comments in parallel with those made in the previous section outlining his perceived need to continue to develop, the reality of the situation may be that HL 4 may not continue to participate in a great deal more development activity. In

addition to these doubts relayed above regarding future career direction, HL 4 also communicated that instinctively he was quite shy. For example, when asked about the possibility of mentoring he appeared to be somewhat unsure whether this would be a suitable role that he could play in the future here. The fact that this manager was relatively old at 47 years of age (in comparison to the rest of the sample) means that his comments are largely unsurprising.

b) Managers in medium category (some prospects of participation)

It was considered that four managers were more likely to continue to participate in development and learning than the managers categorised in the 'low' bracket previously. However for these managers there was still certain elements indicating that they too could potentially have barriers to learning associated with fears or insecurities, or other emotional issues.

For two of the managers there was clearly some apprehension regarding their future position, and ultimately this may have an effect on how proactively they would search for further participation in learning. The case of HL 2 is an interesting one because when asked to describe her experiences of formal education she indicated that the fact that she failed her university course was a traumatic occasion for her. However as with some of the other managers in the other case organisations studied this traumatic event acted like a catalyst inducing more learning and development (both professional ACII and an MBA course). Issues surrounding her previous experiences of education are discussed at more length in Section A6.2.4. However an essential element to note in HL 2s comments was trepidation surrounding her future career direction. For example she stated that she still, *'envisaged that there will be a time, long before [she] reached retirement age, where they'll say she is on early retirement or there isn't actually a job for [her anymore]'*. For HL 6, similar issues came to the fore where he also felt unsure about what exactly the future held for him in this organisation. Again if the comments that were shown in Section A6.2.1 are referred to his uncertainty surrounding the future can be clearly comprehended.

In the case of HL1 and HL 11, the main focus of their comments was related to the effect of certain emotional traits that made participation more difficult. Firstly HL 1 illustrated an element of lethargy, for example when he first entered HL, he did start to do ACII exams but when the *'onus went off'* he failed to finish the course. Also as the following comments illustrate he freely admitted to being 'lazy', and summed up the effect that this could have for learning:

One would imagine that it [having an MBA] automatically would [mean more financial rewards] because you'd be more effective in your job. But I don't know what that involves because I have not done an MBA - I'm too lazy really. Some people that have done it do appear to have advanced, but I'm not interested in gaining academically in that way. I'd rather concentrate on improving myself more specifically for the job or jobs similar - an MBA must be about 80% that you would never use so why do it? (HL 1),

Secondly for HL 11, the effect of a poor learning experience were clearly in her mind when she spoke about her reluctance to be exposed in learning situations. This point is expanded more fully in Section A6.2.5 when the manager's experiences of vocational activities are discussed.

c) Managers in high category (good prospects of participation)

Six managers illustrated that emotional fears or insecurities were not particularly important and therefore they were categorised as having a 'high' propensity to continue learning after considering their comments in relation to this issue. Essentially all these managers were fairly secure with both their own abilities and also with their current and future potential security in the organisation. If an element from one of these managers comments is used for illustration, one can see that he had no fears about the future and indeed, felt that HL was well ahead of other companies in terms of allowing employees time and space to develop:

Interviewer: How do you perceive these external changes have impacted on the employment practices in the company?

As far as I'm concerned, I feel that Highland Life has very good employment practices. You talk about having a career for life, which I think gives a certain amount of stability and security on which you can build and you can develop without looking over your shoulder all the time and I particularly value that. ... I think we can take a more long term view of things and we're not just trying to make hay while the sun shines because you can take a long term view in terms of reward packages and things and I think that's very good. It allows us to do things while others are struggling I know that other companies are going for short term contracts and that type of thing and I don't think that's the way to go at all. (HL 5)

In their interviews all the other managers in this 'high' group (HL 3, 7, 8, 9, & 10) essentially held variations of those views that were related above by HL 4. For example HL 3, spoke about the very deep rooted paternalism still around in HL which he felt sometimes perhaps bordered on being too protective, of some managers who had '*least to offer*'. Similarly HL 10 mentioned the fact that as someone who had worked for a '*hire and fire*' company in the past, he was reassured that HL certainly tended to look after its staff more than most other organisations. Also for the two managers (HL 7 & 10) whose roles were more specifically related to IT in the organisation there was a certain amount of reassurance in that fact that with the ongoing changes in Information Technology this was an exciting area with many opportunities:

Appendix Six

Technology is changing quite fast and if you've a great range of management and technical knowledge that's obviously going to position you well when they're coming to look for people to do exciting jobs in the future. Highland Life as a culture hasn't got a history of sacking people, it never does. But in general we've been very successful in dealing with members of staff in terms of natural wastage, so if any job is secure these days, this is one of the ones that is fairly secure (HL 8)

Before leaving this area related to how emotional insecurities and fears may influence learning and development activities for managers in HL it is interesting to mention the case of HL 9. In his interview he communicated how he had overcome some initial fears about his numeracy skills to become much more active in learning activities. In fact, this manager appeared to have turned these fears around to such an extent that he now quite confident in his abilities and was considering pursuing an MBA. He stated:

What I've found since then was that by getting involved in business studies and accountancy there wasn't anything wrong with my numeracy. In fact, with the right circumstances and the right mental attitude, I've actually done quite a lot on accountancy and statistics and on the project management side all the logic and networking side doesn't present a problem. (HL 9)

Again as with the previous the section the most important features from the above paragraphs are discussed in the summary at the conclusion to this appendix.

A6.2.3 Motivation to participate in Learning Activities – Motivational

a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

As can be seen from Table A6.6, in their interviews it was felt that none of the managers in HL displayed a total lack of motivation to continue to learn in some way. As can be seen in the next two subsections the managers were split roughly between those in the 'medium' and 'high' categories, which indicated that through their comments perhaps at worst certain factors acted as constraints on these managers motivation to learn.

Managers in medium category (some prospects of participation)

Around half (six) of these managers displayed a tendency that although they were motivated to continue to learn and develop in their careers, they were ultimately constrained. Often it appeared that for these managers learning came down to the question of rewards.

Constraints to participating further for two managers (HL 2 & HL 8) were related to their implicit understanding that further movement to roles with greater responsibility could prove detrimental to their private lives. For example, HL 8, who was currently taking a 'breather' from his MBA' summed up the reality of the situation for managers in

this kind of middle level position in relation to the rewards on offer for participating in learning activities:

Interview 1: In term of the MBA, do you think you'll go on and finish it?

I reall don't know. One of the reasons I stopped was to have a breather and think about it and also because the job I'm doing just now is fairly busy and pressurised and everything at work is changing. Possibly not, because I feel that the return on investment is probably not there, for where I am career wise. I think if you were 25 and your aspirations were to reach executive levels of organisations, then it will do you no harm. It may not do you that much good, unless it's a marketing degree or an MBA from Cranfield or Harvard, then that's a positive asset to your career. I think it does no harm, but I'm not convinced that it's a great thing. (HL 8)

The above quotation illustrated that for certain mid career managers, the perceived 'return on investment' was not present for undertaking such formal learning as an MBA, because ultimately if promotion ensued it could lead to more pressure. For some other managers, there appeared to a difficulty in appreciating what specific use management qualifications like an MBA would be. HL 1 pointed out for example that in his perception '*about 80% would not be useful*' in an MBA.

Therefore it was not surprising that all these managers seemed to favour more on the job type activities. For example HL 6 felt that as long as he could keep developing through actually '*managing staff at the level [he was] at*' he would be happy. Similarly for HL 2 and HL 7, clearly they were not overtly motivated to continue to develop through more formal development or career movement because of the potential disruption it could cause to their private lives. For example HL 2 revealed that she was '*close to [her] limits and she did not really want to go to a point where [she was] not doing the job very well or [she would have to] say, well I don't really want to do that*'.

c) Managers in high category (good prospects of participation)

Slightly less (five) managers in HL were positioned in this 'high' category because they had higher motivation to participate in the development activities, which they thought were relevant at this stage in their careers. Although in some respects their comments were similar to those in the medium category discussed above, what marked these managers apart was their ambition. There was no indication in their comments to suggest that those constraints as reported previously, which would make upward moves (if they became available) less appealing, were present. For example HL 3 illustrated that he was extremely motivated and hence (in comparison to some of the other managers here) would have no hesitation to move away from HL and Edinburgh to fully realise his ambitions:

I think you have got to understand that Edinburgh is a small place and there is not that many opportunities. If you are not very ambitious and you are going to stay here, you are really putting the constraints on yourself and really limiting what you can do. If you want to do Investment Banking it is really not an option here there maybe are one or two opportunities but not many, certainly you might find the more ambitious people leaving (HL 3)

However even within this 'high' propensity grouping this manager (HL 3) was more ambitious and motivated than most. In effect for the other four (HL 5, 9, 10 & 11) their high motivation was explained by a desire to continue to do their jobs to the highest possible standard but also learning and development was integral to those goals. The comments of HL 9 were typical of this prevalent point of view:

MM: How do you see your career developing in the next 2, 5 or even 10 years time?

In Highland Life the average retirement age now is 55, now I'm 44 so I could plan on having the basis of 11years, alternatively I could say I have 16 years to go and just manage it accordingly - I'm more planning to the latter actually. So I'm not going to work on the assumption that I'll work till I'm 55. ... I see my career developing width wise, in terms of more responsibility, greater flexibility and the like. I'm thinking in 5 to 10 years that in this division we'll reduce in numbers from 140 to maybe 40. I would like to see myself developing as one of the strategic pool, a specialist who's got a good knowledge of the company and of the market place and of HR issues generally. (HL 9)

A6.2.4 Previous Learning Experiences– Cognitive (General)

In both this section and the one that follows (Section A6.2.5) the managers previous experiences in relation to learning activities, both more formal and compulsory (including school and 3rd level higher education, as well as those of a more vocational nature are explored. In both sections the managers are categorised in three groups (low, medium or high) according to the views and comments they forwarded in their interviews about their previous experiences.

a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

When the managers in HL were asked to describe their previous experiences of formal education, there was no real indication that experiences of either school or university had been so negative as to fully inhibit more participation in further learning activities. However as with managers in the other organisations, particularly GL and LL, certain managers communicated that they had had poor experiences in school, but ultimately these had spurred them onto further learning. With this in mind as is evidenced in Table A6.7 in Appendix 8.2, all the managers are clustered in both the 'medium' and 'high' categories.

b) Managers in medium category (some prospects of participation)

Four managers (HL 1, 2, 6 & 9) indicated that their experiences of formal education were not wholly satisfactory. Hence there was the potential that these experiences could have

led to some reluctance on their part to participate in more learning and development activities, especially those of a more formal nature. Perhaps the most interesting case to note here is that of HL 2, who like other managers in the study, had a very poor experience of her undergraduate university course. HL 2 related how she actually ended up dropping out of university, but was *'very glad to get out because she had picked the wrong course and didn't enjoy it - you know most people think of that time as great fun, but [she] didn't enjoy it'*. The interesting thing to note is that her experience of formal vocational learning and development undertaken whilst working at HL was altogether more beneficial and pleasurable.

In terms of the other three managers listed in this 'medium' category it was shown that only one, HL 9, actually went on to study for both a third - level qualification at university for three years and in addition a one year Post Graduate Teacher Training Qualification (PGCE). The other two (HL 1 and HL 6) went directly into HL after completing their Higher examinations, and hence the comments which they made about their experiences of vocational learning are more important and discussed in more detail in the next sub-section. For HL 9 the interesting thing to note was his instrumentality surrounding the learning process, where exams undertaken were viewed as a means to an end:

Interviewer: Do you think this teacher training course has affected your decisions regarding further study?

I don't think so, I would describe myself not as an academic and therefore it was a means to an end on the study side of things, and it's really been the same since. With the benefit of hindsight, if I could have substituted that year's teacher training and still gone through the vocational learning that took place, but substituted it with something like an MBA, then I would really have been turned on by something like that. To me, the learning has got to be very closely related to the work situation, it's got to be rigorous, it's got to be challenging and teacher training fulfilled none of these criteria - that was the down side of it. (HL 9)

c) Managers in high category (good prospects of participation)

The majority (seven) of the managers in HL, like those from the other organisations studied, reported having very good experiences of formal compulsory and third level education. As one would expect in a cohort which contained an individual with both actuarial qualifications and a Doctorate, as well as four others with Masters level qualifications or university degrees these managers were quick to describe their educational attainment. For example HL 3 stated:

OK, I have got a degree in maths and statistics and also a post graduate diploma in maths and statistics. Worked at Durham University for a couple of years and I have also done research in a PhD and have been published in some top journals. Since I have come to my current employer, I came in as a trainee actuary, so I qualified as an actuary and have got a professional qualification so that really is the end of the formal qualifications. (HL 3)

However the most interesting comments were from HL 8 who took a rather more varied route to educational excellence than the others. HL 8 related his distaste for school in the strongest possible terms:

Interviewer: Was there any significant event that stands out for you?

I loathed school, I was at a selective fee paying school in Glasgow that I was sent to when I was 9 and, like most of these places, it is an exam factory. ... They're obsessed with league tables and I didn't like my school experience, particularly secondary school. I wasn't happy being there and didn't like the ethos of the place, it wasn't about education, it was just about churning out doctors, lawyers and accountants and that's how they measured their success and if you didn't want to play that particular game, then they weren't interested. I don't think my experience was that uncommon, so I left school as soon as I could. (HL 8)

Given his distaste for school it is all the more interesting to note how he proceeded to go to university and, as a full-time mature student, enjoyed the a successful experience:

I completed my 4 year BSc Sandwich with a years work with commendation and I was very boring, [not the course] won all the prizes and that kind of stuff so I really enjoyed being a mature student and was very successful at it. So in the end I was quite academically successful. (HL 8)

A6.2.5 Previous Learning Experiences – Cognitive (Vocational)

a) Managers in low category (unlikely to participate in learning activities)

As is seen in Table A6.8, managers HL 4 and HL 6 were placed in this category as a result of their comments regarding their experiences of work related and vocational learning. Each of these managers had a different point to make about their experiences. HL 4, argued that there had been cases in the past where he had went to conferences and found that because he had already got experience of the material, real learning did not take place. He also found it frustrating that he did not get the chance to put what had been covered in some learning activities into practice immediately. Therefore he communicated his bias towards learning experientially:

Interviewer: Do you think you do quite a bit of learning on the job?

That's where most of the learning's done, I think - on the job - it always has been. I think, the thing with some of these courses is that you go along to and you don't get the chance to practice what you've learned immediately as it were, and the skills that you learn, you tend to forget about them, to be perfectly honest. But the literature is still there and you can refresh yourself now and again, I don't know how often that happens though. ... But you don't tend to come out of the course and then go straight into that particular aspect, Project Management or something like that - some things you go on that you think you may use the skills later. (HL 4)

For HL 6, in his opinion he had not received enough in the way of work related managerial training or opportunities, describing the amount of training undertaken directed towards developing managerial skills as 'zilch', and any people skills that he has learned were based on his experience. He also mentioned that he did try to undertake a part time

MBA, but he ended up having to drop out due to work commitments, which was a regret for him but also illustrated the difficulties he had.

b) Managers in the medium category

As can be seen from Table A6.8 five of the informants (HL 1, 2, 5, 7& 11) were placed in the 'medium' category. Their remarks illustrated that experiences of more vocationally based or work centred learning were not wholly desirable and hence could cause them to reconsider further participation in such activities in the future.

For four who had experienced more substantial pieces of vocational learning involving actual formal study and examinations, as well as more informal development activities, good and bad aspects to each type of activity were reported. For example, HL 2 spoke about the actual experience of undertaking an MBA, being undermined by '*dreadful*' lectures. However more generally the chance to think about business issues and meet with other managers from other industries did have a positive impact on her and she did highly value that aspect of the MBA experience. In terms of the other work related learning events again there appeared to be elements of the good and bad. For example she spoke of very professional seminars presented by '*wonderful*' expert speakers. However, at the other extreme, she also had experienced poor '*compulsory for all employees*' courses, which were useless because often they were designed to enhance skills which she was already practising:

... We've got to have a course that the whole company has got to attend on such and such a thing and you give up a whole day only to find that it's been on something that your team or department has been doing anyway. So you feel as if your whole day has been wasted - it's very frustrating. But, I've found that more from internal courses, although not regularly, than anything that I've ever been to externally.
(HL 2)

It was interesting to note that HL 5, who had also completed an MBA had similar experiences, describing some more academic elements of vocational courses, especially formal examinations as more '*tedious*' than difficult. However, like HL 2 he also valued the whole strategic planning nature of the MBA and the opportunity to think in such ways about other companies and industries:

Some of the academic side, to be honest, has been as the saying goes - 'Peter Parts'. I find academic courses good in parts the way that there are some elements that are very interesting, I'll keep that, but other elements, you just think that's a complete bloody waste of time, this is going to benefit me very little in my future career. . . On the other hand, there are certain studies that you had to do, for example a strategic management study, which was a course that I really enjoyed on my MBA. This involved looking at companies which may not be in your specific industry ... what the prospects were for the industry, how to negotiate should you even get out of the industry just the whole strategic planning of the company and I found that very interesting (HL 5)

For the other two managers the experience of participating in the ACII correspondence course (like other managers from the other four cases) was mixed. For example HL 1 noted that he soon dropped out of the course because he found that it was simply too academic for him and *'they didn't help in his job at the time an awful lot'*. However, he too had experienced some very useful practical type courses and communicated that he particularly enjoyed role play exercises as a form of learning. For HL 7, who did manage to complete the ACII examinations the main implication was that she would be reluctant to embark on anything so formal again especially now that she had the added responsibility of caring for young children.:

Interviewer: Do you think this ACII correspondence course has affected your decisions regarding further study?

Yes because I did so much work that it kind of puts me off doing any kind of formal studying like that just because it takes up so much time especially now because I have got 2 young children - it puts me off. ... I quite like correspondence style and I quite like books, which have enough detail. But it is nice to have someone to bounce ideas off and to talk to, it is a wee bit remote [correspondence] and if you have any problems you really have to speak to people in here rather than anyone who really knew about the course. (HL 7)

The most interesting thing about the remaining manager (HL 11) in this category was the fact that she was generally positive about the various vocational activities participated in. However she also described one activity that had been particularly negative, which could ultimately affect her future participation in such a way that she would fully investigate learning activities now in more detail. The following comments fully describe the scenario:

Interviewer: Were there any factors, which have inhibited your participation in any learning activities?

Yes, I happened to be at a workshop recently when I was invited to go along with a number of other managers in this company to experience a workshop run by an organisation. I was uncomfortable about the methodology and I was uncomfortable about participating because of the style of the workshop leader.

Interviewer: Is there any wider aspects that would make you avoid taking part in any learning activities?

Well yes if I was going to feel particularly vulnerable or if I felt I was going to be put on the spot and didn't feel that I was going to perform or I was going to be targeted for some reason and where I didn't feel competent. But other than that, I have only had one experience so far of a workshop leader who I would say was irresponsible and so lightweight that the workshop was very uncomfortable for the participants. (HL 11)

c) Managers in the high category

The remaining four managers (HL 3, 8, 9 & 10) in HL were placed in the 'high' category in relation to their experiences with more work related and vocational learning. For example, HL 3, who throughout the interview illustrated his confidence and ambition talked about the excellent vocational opportunities he had experienced in HL (his comments in relation to MD opportunities more generally were much more negative - see Section A6.3.2 for details). For HL 3 however, *'excellent'* development was intrinsically related to being *'expo ed to really good managers and wat hing the way they operate and the way that they make decisions'*, rather

than any planned events or activities. This is an important point to note because it illustrates that for managers like these, particularly in highly strategic positions, (HL 3 was an International Development Manager), perhaps more informal mentoring and coaching were the best way to learn.

It has already been noted when these managers' experiences of compulsory and third level full time education was discussed that HL 8 provided a very interesting case in that he was very detached and disillusioned at school that he effectively dropped out. However this poor experience is compared with an altogether more positive experience of more vocationally based learning activities, and the fact that he was at the time of the interview over half way through an MBA course. Again there are important implications relating to this manager's case, in that he communicated his preference for good quality practical and supported learning:

To be able to do something effectively, I ideally like to do it with somebody, working with someone's support that knows how to do it. The college situation, I guess we're talking about, reading or listening to a lecture and writing it down for you to then go and do it, for example writing a program in a lab where there is access to somebody who can help if you get stuck. That's the most effective for me. (HL 8)

For the other two managers (HL 9 & 10) in this high category, similarly there was clear evidence of generally positive experiences of vocational development. In the main again there seemed to be a clear preference for more practically oriented learning activities.

A6.3 Extrinsic Issues and Learning

A6.3.1 Organisation Culture

In this subsection, the manager's views in relation to HL's culture are explored in detail. The most important aspects that each manager communicated about the organisational culture are shown in Table A6.9.

a) Managers in negative category (organisation culture inhibits learning)

Only one (HL 3) of the three managers (HL 3, 4 and 7) categorised in this 'negative' bracket was particularly scathing of the culture. The main focus of his comments was aimed at those who were in the highest echelons of the company responsible for strategic direction. The fact that HL 3 was very ambitious and confident has already been illustrated, and indeed the main implication from his comments were that the company's ambitions were not aligned with his own. He was particularly critical of the fact that HL had decided to remain a mutual organisation, and felt a direct implication of this strategy

would be that it would not be able to compete in the future in the competitive global financial market place. HL 3 felt this conservative focus meant that the most ambitious and talented managers were beginning to leave the company, and obviously this would be detrimental to its future success. The following comments sum up his views:

The company is still trying to stay paternalistic and to protect the people with least to offer. But for the people with most to offer I think there is a turnover of staff, and that is leading to increased salaries and the company is trying to resist, but it is starting to lose good people. The company is trying to say that there is not a problem and maybe they acknowledge that there is a problem. They have been talking for years about changing roles and stripping out the hierarchy but they have not got wide enough skills and experience to do it, and they don't have the courage to do it, but I think it is too late to do it now. It is a very closed culture and the company is run by the management for the management, because it is a mutual company there is less accountability. (HL 3)

The broad theme in the comments from the other two managers in this 'negative' category was that there were clear problems most related to interdepartmental and management/staff conflict. For example when HL 7 was asked to describe the culture, her instant response was, *'What them and us'*? and when she was asked if this was how she perceived the culture she clarified thus:

Interviewer: Is that what you perceive it as?

I think because we are computing we are slightly remote from the business, although in the projects more recently, the business has been involved as part of the team, so you could see more about what the business does as well and that seemed to work as well. I don't think there should be a 'them and us' even 'across the way' in your peers, but I think that yes management does seem to be a bit remote from the rest. (HL 7)

Very closely aligned to these comments suggesting that there were elements of a *'them and us'* culture in place were those of HL 4. The main problem with the culture as far as he was concerned related to the fact that there was a tendency for certain managers to only see their own very small part of the business as important and hence did not look at the whole picture. The following comments in relation to the TCS programme (See appendix 8.3 for details) neatly illustrate his viewpoint:

I'm generalising you understand, because we do have inter-departmental collaboration, and it's something that was just raised on this refresher course for TCS, but it's tremendously difficult. People have their own blinkered ideas and when you sit down at these departmental and inter departmental meetings and you can see people sitting with their own hats on. They have their own points of view and it's difficult to get people to stand back and say, well lets look at this from a different angle and maybe take Legal's [the legal department] point of view rather than the Service [department] point of view.
HL 4

b) Managers in neutral category (elements of culture undermine learning)

For the three managers, placed in this 'neutral' category, there was some acknowledgement that there were good and bad elements inherent in the organisations culture. One manager who characterised this view most markedly was HL 2, who observed that one of the major cultural planks in HL was the *'strong sense of integrity and professionalism'* and also the desire to

be 'doing the right thing'. However for HL 2, there were also some negative aspects of such a risk averse culture that could ultimately affect participation in further learning:

[The culture is] ... highly self critical and slightly cautious. Maybe more than slightly cautious, a bit over cautious, polite you know it is not a macho environment it is very polite culture ... It has had a tendency to be over analytical and thinks too much before it moves and that is the caution thing and it is trying to move to be much more action orientated. But that is a difficult thing to get people to do if people have traditionally been told things and the way to do it. (HL 2)

Continuing this theme relating to the '*politeness*' inherent in HL's culture, HL 8 described the '*consensual and humane*' nature of the company. However he also could see some potentially negative aspects that come with this in that there was potential for certain personalities, not so readily disposed to change, to hold up and frustrate other individuals. The following comments clearly sum up this viewpoint from HL 8:

You have to get a lot of people to agree and individuals can veto and block the right thing happening which can be a bit frustrating if you've got one or two individuals who don't want to see something happen. They can often block it for long periods of time - not by saying no, but by organisational blocking where they just ask for information all the time and don't actually say no. (HL 8)

HL 8 qualified his comments somewhat by stating that, in such a large organisation, it was impossible to generalise on the culture and obviously there was a proliferation of subcultures in place, in certain departments. For the final manager in this grouping, HL 11, as someone relatively new to the organisation, she felt that one aspect of the culture was its attempts to be more progressive and '*community oriented*' and '*relaxed*'. However she felt (similarly to HL 8) that there were other elements, mostly related to individual personalities, that were trying to hold on to aspects of the more traditional culture, which ultimately could undermine learning. She summed up that '*there is still a status consciousness that the executives have privileges that other people don't in terms of the standard of their offices and the location of their offices, and secretarial support. So certainly not a single status organisation*'.

c) Managers in positive category (organisation culture facilitates learning)

The five managers in this 'positive' grouping felt that HL was a very good place to work and were proud of the culture in place. The main difference between those managers placed in the medium category above and these 'positive' managers was their undiluted positive comments about the culture in place. Not surprisingly, certain managers like HL 6 described the culture as being '*fantastic*', or HL 5 who felt that it was very '*meritocratic*'. For three managers in particular, HL 1, HL 9 and HL 10, the main aspect of the culture now was its focus on customer service and for these managers the culture was now very realistic and aligned to the business objectives. They too were quick to illustrate that within HL

although much more commercial in nature there was still a tendency to be protective and look after the employees, which they obviously valued. The comments of HL 9 clearly illustrate the situation:

Four years ago, he [Chief General Manager] said that we're going on a journey that's going to take time, effort, commitment by managers and staff and we're going to have to change the way we do things and this is going to be easy for some people and more difficult for others. But [he said] we will carry the wounded but we'll shoot the stragglers and that was like, oh my God, and coming from him, if you knew him, that was not fighting talk, but real commitment. What he was saying was that we will help people, we'll never become a hire and fire company we resist redundancies like you wouldn't believe because we really are a paternalistic company. (HL 9)

Another very similar point was made by HL 10 more specifically to training and development. He felt that in HL at the present time there was an emphasis for managers to take real responsibility for their own development, but at the same time, as a result of the paternalism in place, there would be real support in place to facilitate this:

We are trying to move from being a very paternalistic company to one where individuals take responsibility for their own career management and managers take responsibility for coaching, guiding, leading, persuading and directing and whatever and the organisation is a friend and a place where things can happen. (HL 10)

A6.3.2 Management Development Culture

a) Managers in negative category (MD culture inhibits learning)

Only two managers (HL 3 & 6) were placed in this 'negative' category in relation to the MD and learning culture. As was observed above, HL 3 was critical of the organisation culture, and in the same vein he was very negative towards the culture in relation to MD and learning. As far as he was concerned, for some of the younger managers, there was ultimately little point in them pursuing an MBA type qualification, because few rewards could be gained in terms of further movement in the organisation. In effect he felt that although the organisation do say they value learning and development, there is little real evidence of this in reality and that there was 'lip service':

I think that life assurance pays lip service to learning and anyone who wants to do an MBA here can do it - but it doesn't make any difference to your career. We have loads of people - younger people who are fairly well qualified, but they have got no where to go. They are better qualified than the senior people are and they have really made sacrifices to do these qualifications and the company has paid for it, yet the company is not using it. So I think the insurance industry is quite backward in terms of valuing qualifications, education and skills and experience. (HL 3)

The other manager (HL 6) in this 'negative' category forwarded different, but still relatively negative, comments about the culture that was in place surrounding MD in HL. For him the main problems appeared to centre on the requirement for managers to be self development orientated. When asked to describe the culture in HL in relation to MD, HL

6 automatically responded that 'an awful lot more could be done for managers here, they have to do it all themselves'. To illustrate this point of view he cited a number of examples where there were courses and other activities that he and other managers would have liked to attend but were not able:

OK there are the MBA courses and the internal courses but there's a lot more they could do for managers and they don't. If you want to, you have to force the issue yourself, you're never fed anything on a plate. You've got to keep looking around for seminars and courses and say I want to go on this, and as I said earlier you have to make a devil's good case for going on them, especially if you do them when they cost money. OK, you can do them internally and there's a cost for the company but you're not actually going and living somewhere for 3 or 4 days down south or whatever but they could do more. (HL 3)

As well as this issue of getting support for training and development, this manager also spoke of the deficiencies in relation to more informal development opportunities. For instance, he felt that often for managers like himself, there were very few people that he could ask about issues related to his development:

There are a lot of people who just come up to my desk and just chat, and I could do without it. But you can't turn people away and I spend most of my time just listening to staff. That is what is missing in this company people to sit and talk to - and I think you would find that personnel would say the same thing. They have people to whom you can go to for counselling to and to classes which you can go to. But they do not have that within the management structure of the organisation but if there is someone who you can go and talk to and to vent your anger at, I will listen to anybody - I mean I cannot go to my own manager, he has only been my manager for 8 months now and I have no option to go and talk to him. (HL 6)

This manager's comments clearly express his concerns over the deficiency in opportunities for more structured mentoring in HL. Interestingly, while this manager was very positive in relation to the culture per se, he held a contrasting view of Management Development.

b) Managers in neutral category (elements of MD culture undermine learning)

As can be seen from Table A6.10, the majority of the managers (six) were placed in the 'neutral' category in relation to the MD culture of HL. In the main their comments illustrated that, although the MD and training in the organisation was improving, there were still certain aspects which could undermine learning activity. For example HL 2, 9 & 11 espoused the view that top managers had the right intentions, which were to some extent evidenced by the commitment to TCS and the comprehensive nature of that programme. However, as would perhaps be expected in a large organisation such as HL, there still remained certain elements of the more traditional culture. For example, while HL 2 spoke at length about the very deliberate attempts to bring about the change in

culture, she also recognised the failings in implementation. Her comments briefly sum up the situation:

I think the intentions are all there the intentions to make training and development that all important big priority, I think it sometimes suffers on implementation and I think it tends too be left to much to your own devices than it should be. You can see they do regular staff satisfaction surveys and you can see from that, that very few people have a formal development plan ... Probably that all the intentions are there, you know in the money spent to try to make training available. Certain types of training programme are rippled through out the company extremely well and extremely diligently and each of the main buildings have a learning centre ... so all the intentions are strong and good but I do think that it probably still fails somewhere in the implementation. (HL 2)

HL 2 further illustrated the view that there was still some ground to cover before training and development would become 'that all important big priority':

I can vividly remember one general manager at the time, he's now a finance director saying to me in a cynical voice, what are you getting out of this MBA thing and I said, well now I realise that Highland Life is not all that different a company you could learn something from other companies and other industries and I got a pff pff response. (HL 2)

And:

I get the feeling, maybe I'm being unfair, that most people my age have switched off to learning. They tend to get quite cynical about things and by 46, that kind of band, most people know that they're not going any further in the organisation. That feeling that they're not driving for their next job, I think that must have been the driver for a lot of people doing planning. So you do get a lot of people going along to courses and things, internal courses, and you get the feeling that they're really just paying lip-service, they're fairly cynical sometimes, not really taking it on board or planning to do anything with it. (HL 2)

HL 9 also gave evidence to suggest that some of the remnants of the previous culture that perhaps did not embody learning and development so readily were still present. For example, a senior MD course called the Executive Learning Programme (ELP) provoked hostility from certain managers who *'won't welcome the assessment and won't relish the thought, they'll think it's just something Personnel are doing to screw up their day'*. However he did qualify this by stating that, although some *'will be less committed or enthusiastic about it, he thought the good thing is that currently our very senior managers are committed to it'*.

For the other three managers they also could see the marked improvement in both structure and opportunities for development, but like their colleagues above, felt that sometimes other factors meant that the message got lost to some extent. For example HL 1, still felt that there was an undoubted bias towards the actuarial side of the business, and that actuarial students really got the best deal compared to others in the organisation. For HL 4, again as a result of the TCS he could see much more concerted efforts to improve learning and development opportunities, with the emergence of learning centres etc. However he also felt, continuing the theme of his comments throughout the interview, someone like him got left behind in it all. Similarly for HL 7, although she felt that the actuarial bias was being eroded to some extent, like HL 4, she was slightly frustrated by the

lack of actual opportunities for her to develop (as a part time member of staff) in the way that she desired:

I would like to get more opportunities I only work part time here so when I am here I tend to have to do project work you know I don't feel that I should spare any time to actually learn which goes against what they are probably trying to do here. You are to try to manage your own career and career development and because I am part time I think I am kind of ... I spend all my time doing project work and not really looking at what I can do to develop myself or whatever. (HL 7)

c) Managers in positive category (MD culture facilitates learning)

The remaining three managers in this cohort were extremely positive about the MD culture that was in place in HL. For these three in comparison to the others interviewed a feeling that the philosophy of learning, development and 'continuous improvement' (HL 5) had permeated most levels in the organisation. They felt that as long as there was some business benefit involved for the individual and the organisation, then anyone who had the desire to continue to develop could do so. To further reinforce this view both HL 8 and HL 10 had one very slight criticism. They both intimated that perhaps development opportunities could be focussed better (because at the moment there were no barriers as far as they were concerned) to ensure that those who did go and ultimately the organisation got the full benefits:

Interviewer: In terms of, more specifically, training and development how would you describe the culture?

I think the culture has changed again over the last 4 or 5 years. I think we spend a large amount of money each year on training and development ... it's a phenomenal figure. I think that there is an understanding now at a senior level of the need and the benefit of investing in staff and we've appointed over the last few years, a series of training managers in each of the divisions, as a public commitment The opportunities are there [for MBAs]. Again we support them in very large numbers, primarily through the OU. As an organisation, we probably have a bigger dropout rate than we would like and I think we probably need to get tighter on who we allow to go forward. I mean that's my problem, rather than not sending enough people. (HL 10)

A6.3.3 Physical Resource Issues

a) Managers in negative category (resource issues inhibit learning)

As can be seen from Table A6.11, three managers (HL 2, 4 & 6) were placed in this category which indicates that they in particular perceived the lack of physical resources as the major source of barriers to learning for them. For these managers the issue of physically not having enough time to complete existing workloads, or the requirement for them to spend significant periods in the office, appeared to be the major factor in explaining their disinclination to embark on further learning.

For HL 2, as has been observed in several previous sections, particularly Section A6.2.1, the fact that she was a working mother with quite a highly pressurised job in HL appeared to be the main constraining factor for her in terms of learning. The fact that she

'worked 'til 6:30 most nights...almost every night and took half to an hours work home and did] a couple of hours at the weekend', discouraged her from further upward movement in the organisation, and influenced what learning she would now undertake.

The other two managers in this category recounted similar stories about the extensive amount of time required for their jobs at moment. For example, HL 6, who was based in the IS division felt that, as a service department for others in the organisation (providing computer equipment and service) the fact that he was so busy was symptomatic of the fact that everyone else in the organisation was too. The following comments clearly illustrate how recent developments have impacted:

Now the company seems to have gone haywire with Highland Life Bank. I don't know if you have seen the adverts and it is proving so successful that these guys are looking for new technology yesterday to do their job. You have just got to do it and stop whatever it is you are doing for anybody else and say give it to the bank, they have taken in £47 million this week in 4 days! ... tele-banking is going to be the way forward and we have got to keep up with what they want - the need and the demands. It is not easy because there are 7,500 people in Highland Life now and in the last 6 months I think we must have given each one a new PC I think and taking their old dumb terminal away from them. It never seems to stop... (HL 6)

In his next series of comments this manager clearly illustrated how such pressure was impinging on his home life, and hence it is easier to understand why he may not wish to take on any more personal development which could absorb even more time:

I try to do all my work here and then forget about it. I have a laptop at home now that I can log in to. When I do, my wife continually gives me a row for logging in - I'm that sad, I actually watched the last Manchester United v Juventus game on the telly with the laptop on my knee, plugged in to the telephone logged in. (HL 6)

For the other manager in this 'negative' category, the increasing pressures of workload was a major factor preventing him from undertaking further learning activity. In his interview he too clearly illustrated the significant physical pressure just to complete the duties required for his job. He felt that ultimately because he worked in a legal area, where there was a lot of activity relating to new regulations for those selling pensions and financial services products in general, it was inevitable that such pressure was going to continue to grow. Hence when he was asked what factors he thought inhibited his participation in learning, he instantly replied as follows:

Workload, no doubt about it. At the moment I'm actually project leader, we've got a legal recruitment plan on the go, and I'm the project leader of one of the projects which is called 'Business As Usual Maintained at a Higher Level.' What we're finding there is, that introducing improvement or ideas, while doing the Business As Usual is a difficulty. We're actually finding the project is suffering from that because it's the improvement project but sometimes I can't get into it or give it my full attention because I've got other things I must do. (HL 4)

b) Managers in neutral category (certain resource issues undermine learning)

Three managers indicated that for them physical resource issues were an obvious factor but ultimately their comments exhibited a more pragmatic approach than their counterparts discussed above. In general the impression was given that whilst their jobs were physically demanding time to participate appeared to not be such an acute problem. There appeared to be an implicit understanding amongst these three managers that ultimately although doing their actual jobs will come first, they also appeared to be more aligned with the need to continue to learn and develop and perhaps make some sacrifices if necessary. For example HL 8 was very quick to point out that to him management was not something that one could expect to be a nine to five job anymore, and although sometimes his *'best intentions'* to continue to develop did get frustrated, he was still pragmatic in his views:

We've got fairly flexible ways...we had flexi-time across the board but we scrapped that above a certain level and people like myself don't have a fixed contract but more an as required type contract. But practically that means you don't have to be in the office at 9:00am and leave at 5:00pm - people work longer hours than that which is part of the game and it does give you that professional responsibility that if you need to take a half day off and can fit it into your calendar, then you can do that. (HL 8)

In further comments his position was summed up and his pragmatism became apparent:

The main constraint is time. The more your job becomes challenging, the less time you have, the harder it is to take 3 days off to go on a training course. Money, because the way things are going in the environment with more competition. The two main areas of competition are customer service and the costs - the cost link is vital - training and development has to be more cost justified and that's part of the move to say you need to look to do things that are for your own development. You should start to look to do some of these things outside the core working time. To use the open access learning centres. (HL 8)

For the other two managers this pragmatism emerged where ideally they would have liked to balance the amount of work and study, but ultimately the effects of physical resource limitations intermittently impacted. For example, whilst HL 7 clearly spoke about her desire to continue to develop and learn about the new *'systems and servers'* related to her job in the IS division, there were the obvious difficulties of having to react to external influences, for example from the government:

... I think now there is more pressure on people to perform as well. On the computing side if legislation comes along we have to change things to suit, you know if the government changes pensions and that sort of thing that will put pressure on us. Whether we will be able to learn or have learning opportunities or whether we will just be having to kind of work really hard to deal with these things. HL 7)

As well as this (as has already been discussed) HL 7 did have family responsibilities too, which influenced how much learning she could also participate in. The other manager in this medium classification, HL 10, recognised that as well as the problem of time to

actually participate in learning events, there was the issue of costs to consider too, especially if learning events involved expensive travel costs:

Interviewer: Having these things in London or wherever, is that a big thing that would put you off going?

Yes because I have got, although I don't actually manage a budget, I am responsible for how part of the budget is spent and justifying the return flight or return rail fare to go down and take part in a conference is expensive. It is not going to cost the earth, but it is our policy holders money that is being spent when we send people down on that so we really have to think carefully about whether we want to spend money that way. (HL 10)

c) Managers in positive category (resource issues not a factor for learning)

The remaining five managers were placed in the 'positive' category here because in effect they forwarded perspectives that suggested that to them issues surrounding physical resource limitations were not major inhibitors to their continued learning and development activity. In essence what appeared to be the case for these managers was that, if learning and development in any form, whether that be courses, seminars or conferences was really needed for ones job, then there was no reason why they would not participate. Perhaps the best example of this view was from HL 3, who felt that finding time or other resources was simply not an issue, because it was paramount for him, if he was to do his job to the highest possible standards to continue to develop. For example when asked whether Scotland as a geographical region had enough provision for managers like him in terms of training and learning, he replied:

I don't know, all the courses that are of interest to me are outside of Scotland. I think that is the wrong way to look at it, I think you should be saying what learning and training do I need and then say where can I best get that. I think if you say you want to do it in Scotland you may get inferior opportunities. There are lots more places outside of Scotland.

Interviewer: So a course or conference in London or even Europe would not put you off going to it?

No, I don't really want to go on a course with the rest of people in this company - I want to have the best that can be offered and that is why I would go to other countries. (HL 3)

For two of the managers here time and physical resource limitation issues were not really uppermost in their minds. They believed that they were continually learning whilst they were carrying out their normal duties and therefore it was not really a question of getting time off for specific learning events:

Interviewer: Do you feel you've got enough time and space to try these things?

Yes, I think you develop on the job anyway. I think you're always given certain interesting things to do. With regards to each project, there are always new challenges so it's not like you're sitting doing the same job for 20 years without a change. Although you're doing the same job, there may be 2 or 3 different projects over a 3 year span and you're changing, always doing different things and the industry's changing. What we did 5 years ago, we wouldn't necessarily be doing it now, so it keeps an interest there and it's creative so I don't see it as a problem in that regard. I seem to be giving you all the good news here. (HL 5)

Representative of the other two managers in this grouping were comments put forward by HL 9. He summed up that although he was acutely aware of the need for continued learning, he also acknowledged that time and space problems were particularly pertinent factors in the environment, but also he was very reluctant to put them down as an excuse. The following comments illustrate his viewpoint:

Interviewer: Do you go on conferences and things like that, or try and network?

Yes, again it's always easy to put the pressures of work down as an excuse, but I do try to attend at least a couple of events each year, a couple of conferences - one or two day conferences, much longer than that, they tend to be more sales orientated than anything else, rather than new learning. So I do enjoy these a lot, I like this networking with other people, hearing new ideas and challenging some of our assumptions. Of course, the quality is variable, but I do enjoy these a lot. (HL 9)

A6.4 Summary and Conclusions

This section summarises the key findings and conclusions in LL in relation to:

- Intrinsic issues
- Extrinsic issues
- Final remarks

A6.4.1 Intrinsic Issues

Table A6.1 below illustrates the position of each manager in HL in relation to propensity to learn according to each of the intrinsic factors and learning. From the table some interesting conclusions can be drawn regarding intrinsic factors and their effects on learning. Each barrier is now discussed in turn in order to extract the main points of interest from the interviews:

Table A6. 1 - Intrinsic Factors and Learning for Managers in Highland Life

Mgr	Perceptual	Emotional	Motivational	Cognitive (General)	Cognitive (Vocational)	Ratings (Total)
HL1	L	M	M	M	M	9
HL2	M	M	M	M	M	10
HL3	M	H	H	H	H	14
HL4	L	L	M	H	L	8
HL5	M	H	H	H	M	13
HL6	L	M	M	M	L	8
HL7	H	H	M	H	M	13
HL8	M	H	M	H	H	13
HL9	H	H	H	M	H	14
HL10	H	H	H	H	H	15
HL11	H	M	H	H	M	13
Totals	H 4[36.5°] M=4[36.5°] L=3[27°]	H 6[55°] M=4[36°] L 1[9°]	H=5[45°] M=6[55°] L=0[0°]	H=7[64°] M=4[36°] L=0[0°]	H 4[36.5°] M=5[45.5°] L=2[18°]	

a) Perceptual

- Fairly even spread throughout the categories.
- 3 managers (27%) in Low category – relatively old, long serving managers with no professional qualifications and a clear preference for more practical learning. Rated experiential learning as adequate.
- Medium category comprising 4 (36.5%) managers – All in middle of mid-career age bracket, comfortable in current positions, impact on home life deemed important, confusion over direction of learning because they perceived that company rewarded performance rather than development.
- 36.5% of managers in High category – a cross section of ages, sexes and qualifications; all realised importance of continued development for career advancement and employability.

b) Emotional

- Very few managers (46%) felt any negative emotions regarding learning (Low and Medium Categories)
- Only 1 manager in Low category – 47 years old, working in legal dept without legal qualification, felt chances for promotion limited, perceived that company practised ageism.
- Medium category comprised 4 (36%) managers all in upper quartile of sample in terms of age, 3 had worked with company for whole career, some trepidation identified in relation to exposure in learning activities and insecurities about future career.
- Majority of managers (6 or 54%) in High category – all very highly educated with higher and professional qualifications, felt positive and secure about the paternal culture which allowed further development in supportive environment.

c) Motivational

- No managers in sample identified as having low motivation (Low Category)
- Remainder split fairly evenly between high and medium motivation levels.
- Medium managers accounted for 55% of sample – mostly married with children, which appeared to effect motivation to continue learning, still motivated to consolidate knowledge and skills in current position.

- 5 Managers (45%) in High Category – all had very high qualifications and had experience with various other companies, highly motivated to develop for lateral or vertical movement within company or to move outwith organisation (employability) to realise ambitions.

d) Cognitive

- No managers in Low Category in terms of cognitive issues relating to full time education.
- Two managers (18%) in Low Category in relation to vocationally based learning – both relatively old and had only worked in HL, reasoning for Low placing includes poor experiences of badly focused courses and failure to complete courses due to lack of discipline in terms of formal learning.
- At other extreme, High Category comprised seven managers (64%) in relation to full time education – all very highly educated (although exception where one manager detested school but went on to win awards for Degree course as mature student) so no cognitive barriers to further development.
- Four managers (36.5%) in High Category in terms of cognitive issues surrounding vocational learning – middle of mid-career age range, again highly educated with strong academic backgrounds, felt personal opportunities for vocationally based training within organisation were both practical and worthwhile.
- There were four managers (36%) in Medium Category in relation to full time education experiences – all aged between 44 and 48 years old, related both negative and positive aspects regarding full time learning.
- Five managers (45.5%) in Medium Category in terms of cognitive vocational learning – issues with previous experiences of vocational learning, while also communicating positive cognitive aspects such as: MBAs poorly delivered but subject matter enjoyed; HL based TCS course poorly focussed but need to participate was appreciated; contradiction between dislike of isolation of correspondence courses and preference for self-study.

A6 4 2 Extrinsic Issues and Learning: Findings from Mid-Career Managers

Table A6.2 illustrates the aggregate findings relating to the extrinsic factors influencing participation in learning. This table enables some interesting conclusions to be drawn regarding extrinsic factors and their influence on learning for the managers interviewed in

HL. Each barrier is now discussed in turn in order to extract the main points of interest from the interviews:

Table A6. 2 - Extrinsic Factors and Learning for Managers in Highland Life

Mgr	Organisational Culture	MD Culture	Physical Resources	Ratings (Total)
HL1	+		+	8
HL2				5
HL3	-	-	+	5
HL4	-		-	4
HL5	+	+	+	9
HL6	+	-	-	5
HL7	-	\	\	5
HL8	\	+	\	7
HL9	+	\	+	8
HL10	+	+	\	8
HL11	\	\	+	7
Totals	+ = 5 [45%] \ = 3 [27.5%] - = 3 [27.5%]	+ = 3 [27.5%] \ = 6 [54.5%] - = 2 [18%]	+ = 5 [45%] \ = 3 [27.5%] - = 3 [27.5%]	

a) Organisational Culture

- Almost half of managers (5 or 45%) positive about the culture in place in HL, yet rest of sample had certain issues, some rather negative.
- Positive managers (all from upper quartile in age range, 44-48). Two who had only ever worked in HL very positive about the paternal aspects but also encouraged by changing orientation towards customer service, while other three who had worked elsewhere appreciated the friendly and meritocratic atmosphere in comparison to experiences of other workplaces.
- Neutral managers (3 or 27%) – positive and negative aspects of culture mentioned. For example politeness, professionalism and integrity, but also certain elements that tainted culture: risk aversion; over-critical and analytical; status and grade consciousness (from certain individuals) which prevented wholesale change. Two of the three managers who had worked elsewhere (police and higher education), felt in general that culture was still better than last workplaces in terms of politics etc.
- Negative managers (3 or 27%) – one manager (PhD and actuarial qualified in strategic position) very scathing of short-sighted and closed nature of top management who had little accountability or ambition to drive HL forward globally (meant that talent was leaving the company). Others frustrated by interdepartmental and staff/management conflict which hampered cross fertilisation but promoted 'blinkered' thinking.

b) MD Culture

- Majority of managers (9 or 82%) placed in neutral or positive categories illustrating that culture in relation to learning and development improving, yet two managers negative about the support, structures and opportunities in place.
- Negative managers (18%) – two managers from opposite ends of educational and managerial spectrums in this organisation indicating the perceived problems with MD provision across the organisation. For example the first manager was educated to PhD and actuarial levels and occupied a very strategic position (International Development manager), but the second had joined HL after Higher examinations and had worked his way up to a middle management position (IS Manager). Both felt the opportunities were poor for development, but there were few rewards in place either. In effect there was lip service paid to MD. Also problems in too much emphasis on self development with little real support.
- Medium managers – general theme of ‘Management Development improvement’ for six managers (54.5%) who covered good cross section of organisation in terms of departments and tenure. Support and commitment enhanced as well as available opportunities after TCS initiative. But inevitable problems also: implementation not aligned with intentions; personalities blocking because do not value learning and, certain groups not well catered for (part-time and older staff).
- Positive managers (three or 27.5%) – clearly development orientated, motivated and understanding of need to continue to learn (two with Personnel/Development backgrounds and other very positive throughout in relation to development). MD culture now firmly embedded at all levels with opportunities (perhaps too many) in place as well as support to allow follow through.

c) Physical Resource Issues

- Most managers (72.5% either neutral or positive) in HL fairly pragmatic regarding the effects which physical resources could play on their learning participation, but three (27.5%) in particular very negative about the impact of increasing workload on not only professional but also home lives. These three managers were all married with children and had worked in HL all their careers, noticing the pace and pressure building up with the introduction of new initiatives and ventures.
- Majority (45%) forwarded positive comments – being prepared to develop and finding the time was now considered as a vital part of one's job, so there was a reluctance to

blame time pressures or other physical resource issues such as costs for non participation. All these managers had highly responsible jobs within various departments.

- Three relatively highly qualified managers (27.5 %) in neutral category – certain amount of pragmatism but in roles (two in IS and other from People Development) that were liable to be influenced by external forces which sometimes undid good intentions. Also concerned about costs of travel and using precious budgets, therefore needed to be cautious about certain learning activities.

A6.4.3 Final remarks

From the two Tables A6.1 and A6.2 above cataloguing the overall situation in Highland Life with respect to the managers' comments on the various issues connected with learning participation some interesting overall conclusions can be drawn.

Firstly in relation to intrinsic issues it can be seen that over half (seven) of the managers were rated relatively high overall with scoring thirteen or above when the figures for the five issues were totalled. As can be seen HL 10 was rated in the high category for all the intrinsic factors and indeed for two out of the three extrinsic factors. The only real issue that this 44 year old male manager from the People Development department who was married with two children had was with the physical demands currently in terms of workload that were being placed on his time. However even in respect to this he was relatively pragmatic about the need to overcome such difficulties to still participate.

The positions of several other managers were also interesting. Managers HL 3 and HL 4 both had total scores of fourteen in relation to intrinsic factors showing their high propensity to continue to participate in learning activities. For example in the case of HL 3, who was probably the highest qualified manager of those studied across the five case studies, holding both a Doctorate and actuarial qualifications, there was a clear indication that because of his ambitious nature he would participate in any learning which would further his career. However what was interesting was the fact that in relation to both the overall organisational culture and the culture in relation to MD he was extremely negative, illustrating that if any barriers to learning were to arise they would originate here. In a similar way HL 9, although positive about the overall culture, again felt that the MD culture, although improving somewhat, could be the source of potential barriers to learning for both him and his colleagues.

Appendix Six

In relation to the two managers (HL 4 and HL 6), who were rated as being more negative in relation to both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, it was interesting to note their similarities in terms of age (47 and 48 years), marital status (both married with children) and careers (HL all their working lives). From their comments these managers had similar feelings about their perceived need to continue to participate in learning at this stage in their lives, and both felt they had experienced poor learning activities at work. In relation to extrinsic factors the effects of having limited physical resources (time and cost) also appeared to be issues for them, both were rated negatively in relation to this.

Table A6.3 Highland Life Manager Profiles

	HL 1	HL 2	HL 3	HL 4	HL 5	HL 6
Age	45	46	39	47	47	48
Sex	M	F	M	M	M	M
Marital status	Married	Divorced, but co habiting with partner for 14 years	Married	Married	Married	Married
Spouse	Part time Assistant in Estate Agents	Teacher	Lawyer	Works for HL	Health Visitor	Sales Representative manager – HL
Quals.	Highers	MBA	PhD	BSc Social Science	Architect, MBA	Highers
Children	2	2	No	1 (Stepdaughter)	2	2
School Stage of children	13, 6	3, 5	NA	9	10, 12	21, 23, (both HL employees)
Parents occupation	F – Agricultural worker / miner M Housewife	F – BT engineer M – personal Assistant – Civil Service	F – Bookkeeper M – Teacher	F – BR (Pensions administrator) M – Sales Assistant	F – Iron moulder M – Housewife	F – Coach builder M - Housewife
Org title	Assistant Marketing Manager	Process Improvement Manager	International Development Manager	Assistant Legal Manager	Development Manager	IS Manager
Career history	HL – all career	HL – all career (27 years)	Durham University – researcher	HL – all career	Various – Canada, HL for 7.5 years	HL all career
Distance from office	20 25 mins on bus	30 mins drive	10 mins drive	Half an hour walk	30 miles – train used – hour and half	7 miles – 20 mins morning, 40 mins evening
Hobbies and Pastimes	5 a side football, swimming, reading, pubs and cinema	Family are main thing – used to play golf	Reading and Gym	Football, (was HL Captain), watching Hearts now	Family related – kids entertainment – property development is hobby	Golf, Ice hockey, supports Hearts

	HL 7	HL 8	HL 9	HL 10	HL 11
Age	37	41	44	44	47
Sex	F	M	M	M	F
Marital status	Married	Married	Married	Married	Divorced
Spouse	HL IS Division	Teacher	Sales Manager	Housewife, Receptionist	NA
Quals.	ACII	BSc	Post Grad Teaching Qualification	BA Business Studies	MEd Psychology and Adult Learning
Children	2	No	3	2	No
School Stage of children	2 5, 10 months	NA	24, 22, 13	10, 8	NA
Parents occupation	F – Civil Servant M – Music Teacher	F – Civil engineer M – Secretary	F – Engineering Manager M – Retail Manager	F – Teacher (but worked as baker) M – Housewife	F – Engineer M – Housewife
Org title	Senior Analyst	Project Manager	Divisional Quality Manager	Consultants Manager – People Development	Consultant – People Development
Career history	Research Assistant (Veterinary School), Research Chemist	Various. Policeman 5.5 years, General Insurance, Journalist	Teacher (4 years) Sakes manager, Management Consultant, Management Development	Various: Ford, Drivers Brewery, Alloa Brewery, HL for 7 years	Manager of Post grad programs at University
Distance from office	20 miles – 20 mins train	20 miles – 20 mins on train	4 miles, 15 20 mins drive	12 mins drive	49 miles – train and car used to travel
Hobbies and pastimes	Orienteering (less so now with children)	Golf and Mountaineering	Hillwalking and sailing	Family entertainment, keeping fit, hill walking	Swimming, family and City Breaks

Tables A6.4 – A6.11 Highland Life Tables Illustrating Evidence from Informants
Table A6.4 Perceptual issues and Prospects for Participation in Learning amongst HL Informants

	Low	Medium	High
HL1	Negative yet realistic about his need for development has never done anything formally in terms of exams or attending conferences does not value what such interventions could do for him at this career stage [7,13,16,20,24,51]		
HL2		Got to the stage in her career where feels she is 'reaching [her] limits' and is relatively happy with position in the managerial hierarchy to move any further would involve giving away more personal and family time. [24]	
HL3		Interesting manager because he is obviously very ambitious but did not think that personal learning and development was 'crucial' for him. He felt that exposure to good managers and companies was the best form of development at this stage of his career if he wants to make it to the top [17,24,25]	
HL4	Knows as a manager he has some responsibility to his staff to be interested in development but at the same time describes himself as a 'dinosaur' in his department and hence moving any further not possible – does not really see the point in further development [23,24] Elements of knowing enough already reinforced by experience at conference pretty much aware of the basics [4]		
HL5		More interested in 'doing good projects than moving onwards in the company or 'pegging up' bureaucracy as he calls it. Therefore there is a feeling that he does want to continue to develop and does see the importance of it all, but is very much concerned with how that can help job. [20,14]	
HL6	Implication of the fact that in 30 th year with HL and never done any real formal development with the company would be more inclined towards more ad hoc on the job learning. Thus form of learning appears to have stood him in good stead in his career. Feels as a result of his experience he has the edge over the younger graduates entering the company [8,22,23]		
HL7			Returning after maternity leave and would like to see a real need to keep developing and would like the opportunity not to 'stagnate' [20] Going on a consultancy course to get hands on into the 'things' [2]
HL8		Middle of MBA – taking a 'breather' at the moment may or may not go back and finish off. Connected to his feeling that he is fairly happy at present in job - good balance - 'further you go the less payback you'll get' [6,8,23]	
HL9			Looking for further career, more laterally than move further up and sees learning and development as an important part of that in that he will have to get more specialist knowledge as the department gets smaller [5,23]
HL10			Real driver is really that he knows there will be further reorganisation and redeployment and therefore needs to develop further if he wants to remain employable [19]
HL11			Need to develop further for the role that she wants to pursue in her career – Occupational psychology [2,21]

Table A6.5 Emotional factors and prospects for participation in learning amongst HL Informants

	Low	Medium	High
HL1		Main aspect – feels he may need to be 'pushed' (stopped ACII because onus in company went off it) into training and development because he does not really value more formal learning [7]	
HL2		After failing university felt let her parents down. Partly in connection to that and feeling embarrassed about going further in the company but not having a degree – decided to do the MBA and also the ACII exams. Emotional event of failing university acted as a catalyst to more formal development [12,13,14,18]. Future – insecurity about what will happen but not really interested in sacrificing a good home life for company [24].	
HL3			No emotional issues mentioned can see why other managers without transferable skills feel insecure. Although a characteristic of HL is to 'protect the people with the little to offer' [30-32]
HL4	Insecurity present does not see much prospect for career progression and describes this as a 'sore spot'. Main emotional problem - company not honest ('practising a bit of ageism') to managers in his age group [23,24]. Also notes his 'shyness' that sometimes makes it hard to make the 'initial step' in learning – reference to mentoring [40]		
HL5			No fears or worries about the future or company – company has got a good longer term view of the situation and thus means not 'looking over your shoulder all the time' [24]. Also no fear about trying new things because would like more varied experience [15]
HL6		Some anxieties about future position - has been passed over recently by younger managers who have come in with degrees etc. As he looks up the hierarchy he sees fewer positions for him. However, fairly happy as long as he can keep in contact with and manage people. [22]	
HL7			Understands the increasing pressure but not a major factor – would like to think that she would progress further with career etc [24,25]
HL8			Fairly secure in terms of own skills and abilities and in relation to the company because he feels that (IT) is a secure job to be in at the present time [21,22]
HL9			Emotional factors in the past but has overcome many things ultimately a waste of time when he did teacher training - wished he had done an MBA for example [11]. Another factor related to doubts about his ability in the past – e.g. numeracy not best, but has since found that he should not have been so worried about it because his ability is good enough for job [12,13]
HL10			Realise some of the difficulties involved in the modern environment – for him personally not really that concerned has worked for a 'pure and fire' company in the past and knows what they are like not really that bothered by future [24]
HL11		Company still fairly paternalistic – but emotional issue mentioned here revolving around exposure and vulnerability in learning event [26].	

Table A6.6 Motivational factors and prospects for participation in learning amongst HL Informants

	Low	Medium	High
HL1		Little motivation to undertake anything (formal) at the moment especially anything like an MBA where there is a feeling that only 20% would be used. Also feels simply that he would be too lazy to undertake anything like this now [52]. But in medium category because motivated to participate in informal events	
HL2		Constrained - with both her role in the organisation (works fairly long hours works to 7pm most evenings, and home life. The next level up requires more commitment to the organisation in terms of social engagements. Therefore not really motivated to move in that direction [24,25]. Also was motivated to undertake the ACII qualification although not something that the female employees were encouraged to do in past wanted to prove not a 'dodo' [14]	
HL3			Ambition clearly is there more than others in the organisation are talks in terms of leaving the organisation to gain to realise the ambitions that he desires [12]
HL4		Motivation to continue learning on the job and carrying out his job to the best of his ability and if that involves development will contact the Open Access Development Centre to see if there are potential opportunities. Mostly constrained by his perception that the organisation is not interested in his career progression [8,12,23]	
HL5			Motivation really connected to taking any opportunities that will enhance his ability to do his job. Doing 'good' projects but not really interested in upward movement and therefore there is a need to be more orientated to getting development that is connected to his job - still plenty to learn [20]
HL6		Would not classify himself as either a risk taker or an ambitious person more interested in his staff than working any further up the organisation. Knows what the environment higher up is like (working longer hours - not for him - would rather get work finished and forget about it when at home (often not possible now). [5,21]	
HL7		ACII experience has limited her motivation here - would not really want to do anything formally based again because of the time it took up. Also with younger children (just back after maternity leave) it would be hard to spare much time, but motivated to continue to develop for current job [5]	
HL8		Impression given that the MBA will not be completed because not really convinced it will do much good to career. Decision is related to his desire to go any further in career anyway, no real financial need either. However clearly motivated to continue doing a 'professional and stimulating job' and therefore continuing to learn in some way. [6,23,24]	
HL9			Relatively ambitious, but realistic about potential movement, but certainly he wants to add something extra to the department and add to his life in terms of width [23]
HL10			Really there appears to be a desire to keep family and home life away from work life and therefore although he values the need to continue to develop and perform there is also the implication here that there is little real motivation to do anything that will harm this lifestyle [13,19]
HL11			Motivated to continue to do useful activities that will allow for real development to take place and there will not be big risks involved which could potentially damage her or other participants in the future [15]. Also Occupational Psychology course a possibility

Table A6.7 Cognitive issues - prospects for participation in learning amongst HL Informants (General)

	Low	Medium	High
HL1		No real issues mentioned about formal education - left school and came straight to HL. Early years attempted some of the ACII exams but as the onus went off and he did not complete - theme throughout interview that he feels that there need to be real practitioners in organisation and he feels that experience is key to success [1,7]	
HL2		Fairly negative experience of third level higher education where she failed the course, which has always been a source of regret. Her parents felt more negative about it than her. She did not enjoy the course because she had picked the wrong one. Meant that she had something to prove when she went into work and ended up doing MBA and ACII exams [1,12]	
HL3			Very successful and accomplished formal education career through to PhD qualification and publication in top journal while working at Durham University [1]
HL4			Good experience at compulsory and higher education from Highers to Edinburgh University (BSc Social Sciences) appeared to be an easy enough transition to make [1]
HL5			Positive experience with professional qualifications at higher and also other degrees gained include a Masters in Design and also some years after graduating with an MBA while in Canada. Examinations never a problem - in general accepts that in certain academic courses can be tedious and irrelevant but in other ways are good. 'Peter Parts' (several personal issues in T b A 8) [1]
HL6		Fairly average education at school - Highers etc. and came into HL initially with the idea of doing actuarial studies but failed the test, but no real issues coming out from school - more important aspects in terms of work related learning or lack of it. [1,2]	
HL7			Again successful educational experience. Highers and university (completed degree in microbiology), worked in that field before moving to HL to work in the IS department [1]
HL8			Interesting route into higher education where he left school after higher exams to work because he had 'had enough of education at the stage' as he 'loathed school'. Joined police service for 5 years - wanted to do degree at that stage and as the police would not sponsor left to go full time. In the end had a very positive experience of formal learning - qualified with a BSc in Computer Science (won prizes and commendations in the 'end' was academically quite successful) [1,2,4] Stated that because of success at university positively affected decision to attempt an MBA [5]
HL9		Formal and compulsory study is a means to an end - quite successful in the main and qualified as a teacher - but would not regard himself as an academic and even in the teacher training found that he liked the more practical aspects than anything else [1,2,3] Some issues about mathematics and felt that he was not very good at it - may have affected his decisions regarding further study early on in career but now more confident and comfortable with his ability numerically [12]	
HL10			Fairly standard and successful experiences on the whole positive in the main about formal learning [3]
HL11			Similar to HL10 - experience from school to university MA and MEd. Learning in formal sense enjoyable and successful [1]

Table A6.8 Cognitive issues and prospects for participation in learning amongst HL Informants (Vocational)

	Low	Medium	High
HL1		Similar views on compulsory FTE as VET learning - focussed on informal learning that he can actually put into practice in current job - 'formal teaching, personally I don't rate too highly'. Illustrated by decision to not continue with work related ACII course when company encouragement ceased [7,57,58]	
HL2		Mixed experience of Vocational learning experiences. 'Dreadful' lectures for MBA - not practical and poor in comparison to American presenters - 'wonderful in comparison to higher education lecturers' [5,6,7] But like HL 5 enjoyed strategic aspects of MBA. However feels some in house courses have been poor - elements of sheep dip - 'preaching to the converted'. [16, 23]	
HL3			Very positive experiences in the company of the learning that he really wanted at time exposure to really good managers in various companies. Made a la tng impre on better than other formal or informal courses that he has went on has [3,4]
HL4	HL4 gave experience of courses participated in at work and also external conferences finds that sometimes when you go to these external events you know already the crux of the material and it is therefore a waste. The full potential of other experiences has been frustrated because of a lack of time to actually put things learnt into practice. Gone somewhat to reinforce view that best way to learn is on the job theme throughout career at HL [4,8]		
HL5		Mixed feelings and perception of the work related learning that has been undertaken - MBA in particular (taken when aged 35) in places 'tedious' especially examinations but also in places 'enjoyable' - strategic management issues involved. Generally good and bad views - bad elements really linked to feelings that more academic elements were not likely to benefit him much in future career' [4,5]	
HL6	HL6 interesting case contradictions in place. States that he has had 'rich' training in HL, but has done various courses supervisory, leadership skills) and also started a (co sponsored) MBA but dropped out because 'stopped being a manager' Major issue - feels never been adequately trained to manage success up to now has been linked to common sense [8,9]		
HL7		Successfully completed the ACII exams. Experience has put off thinking about more formal type learning, now feels it is important to have really practical and work related learning experiences. After maternity leave more interested in finding out what is happening and getting updated again - but in favour of more informal learning and development methods although frustrated by CBT [2, 11]	
HL8			Total transition from CET school to VET (particular university learning led to the MBA course undecided about whether to complete but that more related to contextual factors i.e. 'return on investment' at this stage, than the learning experience which is sound [4-6]

HL9			Positive about the work related learning participated in Nothing to suggest anything negative about actual experience. However regrets that the Teacher Training course was not substituted by an MBA - much more value to him. [2 11]
HL10			Positive about learning and development in relation to informal activities which have been undertaken [3 12]
HL11			Fairly positive about learning received, but has had poor experiences when exposed by irresponsible workshop leaders - now much more demanding customer and needs to fully understand the aims, objectives and methodology of any course she participates in now. [10-12]

Table A6.9 Organisational cultural issues (Culture of organisation and industry): Impact on learning in HL

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
HL1			Positive about the culture in place underlining mes age now is that the cu tomers are the keys to the futur and the culture now refl cts thus F thus is appropriate and cites no negative aspects of cu tur Message that s drvn en across and if you want to develop in anyway to h p thus then there w be upport. [3 34]
HL2		Culture which has a lot of integrity and professionalism around but problems associated to the sometimes overcautious approach taken regarding decisions P th ps bit too conservative for today's modern environment. [35]	
HL3	Critical of the inconsistency of the culture Feeling that w th mutual status loss of potential to really compete on the bigger stage Too late to change now but the main problem is that the really ambitious will not be ab e to succeed here [32,33]		
HL4	Mixed feelings surrounding the culture in place which has changed to be more customer focussed which it has had to do Still elements in place that undermine the direction of the company very 'blunkered' individuals people wearing their 'own [departmental] hats' rather than think about the company as a whole [35 37]		
HL5			Very positive about the culture, which is de cribed as being very meritocratic where if you are performing in your job then, you will get rewarded [?]]
HL6			Very positive about the culture in place in HL but has worked at HL for 30 years (three oth r members of his family also employed by HL Has not experienced other organ ational cultures and may find it hard to criticise, but has noticed others who have left but came back again and have noted how good the culture at HL is in comparison to other organu n [8 30]
HL7	Describes a them and us' culture on number of levels, firstly IS and other departments (IS seen as basically asked to serve other departments Secondly sees a gap between management and staff in the organisation too where management 'do seem to be a bit remote fr m the rest' [27 29]		
HL8		Consensual culture in place which is quite humane and has integrity, but there are drawbacks in that the individual does have the power to veto and there are always characters in place who do not want to change. Impossible to sum up the culture in such a large organisation In general political elements present but compared to previous organisation (police) much more humane and decent culture 33 36]	

HL9			<p>Become more updated with elements like the TCS, which have been designed to illustrate the importance of the customer. Essentially the organisation received a wake up call but indicative of the remnants of the paternal culture were shown by the statements of the CEO which illustrated that we are going on a journey but we will carry the wounded but shoot the stragglers' [32-34]</p>
HL10			<p>Positive about the fact that the culture now driven by business needs. Realisation that to get the best out of employees they have to take responsibility for careers and development but at the same time there is a need for the organisation to 'coach, guide, lead, persuade and direct the organisation is a friend and a place where things can happen' [23,24]</p>
HL11			<p>Feels company culture has changed for the better. But admits has little real experience of it but can see that people are still to some extent conscious about the grade that they are in and the status that they should be afforded. [25]</p>

Table A6.10 MD Culture issues (Opportunities learning climate in organisation): Impact on learning in HL

	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Positive</i>
HL1		Culture in relation to development and training positive and not lacking in structure or opportunity if people have the desire to go. A negative point is that he feels the organisation is dominated by actuaries and even though it is changing for the better actual students do tend to get a better deal – one day a week off to study and two tutorials per month. However main point to note that even with this background this manager is personally not particularly interested in development, but MD culture would not hold him back. [42,46]	
HL2		'All the intentions are there ... to make training and development that all important big priority' – however does have some reservations about the implementation of this strategy. Feels that it loses a bit as it moves down the organisation where people are often 'left to their own devices' and very few have a formal development plan. They need to be shown the importance of taking responsibility for self development. (Political) problems in that managers are often fearful of allowing people to fully reach their potential – afraid of losing good employees to other projects and departments. [37,43]	
HL3	Negative in a number of ways about the MD culture generally. Although those at the top of the organisation are trying to change and get development and learning higher up the agenda the fact is that often there is 'lip service' and 'learning is not valued' [13]. There are no real rewards for getting an MBA and 'it doesn't make any difference to your career', which ultimately would put him and other young and ambitious managers off. Feels that the company is 'blunkered' and not prepared to look towards longer term opportunities (China) and this is representative of the lack of opportunities in the organisation. [10,15,37]		
HL4		Generally feels that the organisation training and development culture is improving and with the Open Learning Centres and the whole TCS implementation there are now opportunities and encouragement for people to learn. However this manager clearly feels that for someone of his age and position there is little chance of further movement so is not really very interested in the availing of any of these opportunities – many (Customer service) of which he has been operating with anyway throughout the years. [9,35,37]	
HL5			Very positive about the learning and development culture in place both in relation to opportunity and the structures which have been set up to enable managers to undertake learning and development. [27,29] In summary feels that 'there's an ethos and hope of continuous improvement which is fundamental within the company' [33]

HL6	Feels that essentially you have to be too much really self development orientated to get anything in the company. It is correct that as a manager you have to look towards your own development, but sometimes you really have to force the issue yourself. and make a devils good case for going on them [36] Could be so much more done in terms of mentoring – there are no structures or avenues in place for you to go and speak to people who will really listen to you and be able to advise on everything from development to your future career [43]			
HL7		Feels that the MD culture is getting better and has changed from the old model where it appeared that if you were in the right place at the right time then you would get the opportunity, or if you were an actuary. However still a little negative about the amount of development opportunities that she gets personally [14,35]		
HL8			Good opportunities around that are allocated in a very common sense way where if you need something for your job then there is not a problem you get the time and the expenses paid. If more in relation to development you will have to put a bit more into it but this is accepted and right. If there is a failing it may be related to the fact that sometimes things are not focussed enough towards the individual and people are 'not on training courses they don't actually need' [36]	
HL9		Genuinely feels that the culture in relation to training and development is changing for the better because there is commitment from the top. Have accepted that to survive there needs to be real development happening. However there are inevitable problems amongst colleagues who do not welcome the Executive Learning Programme (ELP) and see it as 'just something Personnel are doing to screw up their day', and others will be less enthusiastic towards it. [36-39]		
HL10			Similar views to HL8 where he feels that it is definitely improving and certainly if something is business related then there will not be a problem in terms of learning and development. Also sees that top managers have totally accepted the need to continue to invest in staff and managers at all levels for the future. Same aspects related to provision as HL 8 where there are probably too many people offered MBAs and too many then drop out. Could be over monitoring to see if it is really going to achieve anything for the individual and the organisation [28-32]	
HL11		Does appear to be significantly clear support from the top for training and development initiatives like TCS etc. However as with all things she has no doubt that there are in place a good number of managers who do not value training and development and are probably more focussed on their objectives to actually think much about learning and development [27]		

Table A6.11 Physical Resource Issues (Time, place, costs): Effects on learning participation for HL Informants

	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Positive</i>
HL1			No real physical resource issues mentioned. If he had to go on a course it would be very focussed towards actual work activities and not exactly developmental – more interested in on the job learning. [15,16]
HL2	Physical pressures of actually spending time in the office are a limiting factor. If you want to have good home life there is no way that you would want to take on anything more, for example moving further requires you to do more socialising and representing on the company's behalf. [24]		
HL3			Physical resource issues not an issue for this manager. More concerned with actually finding the best opportunities for him to develop. Not an issue of their proximity and certainly not a question of finding time – if they were of use to him he would find the resources to go. [22]
HL4	Negative about the amount of work that is being done and the workload is described several times as the prime factor in explaining why this manager could not participate in learning and development opportunities. [8,13,14,22,27,39,41,45]		
HL5			Feels that in the course of his job he is doing interesting and developmental jobs, but more specifically as regards issues is very positive and feels that there are no time or space problems for him. [32]
HL6	New development in the company – e.g. the new banking division have meant that recently the organisation and particularly the IS department have gone 'haywire' where people are looking for 'new technology yesterday'. Forwarded examples where work has recently impinged on home life. Also illustrates how spending more time in the office is just expected of managerial level staff now not happy about this. [11,13,15,16,38]		
HL7		Physical resources pressures are certainly a factor, especially time and cost involved in learning and development. There is an implicit understanding that the work and projects will come before any development. This manager would like to develop further but there are certainly problems associated to the work and family pressure at this stage in her career. [25,40,41]	
HL8		Recognition of time constraints when you get to the level that he has reached within the organisation. Pragmatic about understanding the need to keep developing but sometimes has 'the best of intentions' but ultimately is caught up in work. Also recognises that as things change there is a requirement to work more than 9-5pm – you need to be flexible and put in the hours – simply a fact of life now, but that can affect your participation in learning and development activities. [18,30,39-41]	

HL9			'Easy to put pressures of work down as an excuse but I do try to attend at least a couple of events a year' Really an illustration of this managers pragmatism and unwillingness to use the obvious physical pressures that he is under as an excuse to further development participation [3,6]
HL10		Issues relating to physical pressures of time at work have been a factor in the past in decisions that have been made with regards to participation. As is shown by other comments made in the interview this manager does clearly recognise the need for development. But as someone who works long hours and is conscious of the cost implications of development (flights and fees) there are obvious inhibitions about further development activities. [3,8,18]	
HL11			Nothing really related to physical resource issues and cost pressures not a factor for this manager time

APPENDIX SEVEN

Background Information relating to the Five Case Organisations

A7.1 Introduction

This Appendix provides general information relating to the five life assurance organisations that were studied. The information for this Appendix was collected from interviewing the Personnel/HR Managers responsible for Management Development and Training and also from general information either supplied directly by the organisation or more generally available through the companies Internet site or public information service. In the sections below, there are sub sections relating to their Management Structure and Communication Processes; Organisational Culture; Organisational Strategy and Management Development; Human Resource Development Processes, and Individual Performance Measurement.

A7.2 Central Life Assurance Company

A7.2.1 Management Structure and Communication Process

At the head of the organisational hierarchy of Central Life was the Group Executive of six senior managers, with the Corporate Heads of Divisions below. Immediately below these 20 Senior Managers were nearly 100 managers, half in the sales division (Regional Sales Managers) and half Unit Managers located at the Head Office, who typically managed either a group of Team Managers or other specialist units. Below these Team Managers were the Team Leaders and Team Members.

The T&D Manager indicated that the vast majority of those defined as being at the mid career stage had at least attained Team Manager status. In practice, those less than 35 years old rarely got promoted to Team Manager level. Similarly very few managers in the early or mid thirties age bracket would reach the Unit Manager level. However a considerable number of employees in the category of Team Member or Team Leader were well into their mid thirties or forties.

This structure was created in 1985 to flatten the organisational hierarchy and resulting in four levels under the Corporate Heads: Unit/Regional (Sales) Manager; Team Manager; Team Leader, and Team Member. The T&D Manager felt that, compared to the previous organisations she had worked for, decision making in CL was fraught with difficulties: *'I had not appreciated that we had had a lot more autonomy in her previous organisation and I came here and I couldn't believe how long it took to make a decision.'*

On the issue of internal communication there was evidence of serious attempts to try to improve communications between the layers of management, with the creation, in 1995, of a separate team to deal with the issue of internal communication.

A7.2.2 Organisational Culture

The most significant aspect mentioned by the T&D Manager in relation to organisational culture was the fact that there had recently been an official attempt to change the culture within CL. CL's past organisational culture closely resembled the characteristics of the traditional financial services organisation, dominated by paternalism for the employees who tended to spend most of their careers in one organisation. The central rationale for reengineering the culture was to eradicate what was described by the T&D Manager as a '*blame culture*', which she felt often ended up '*constraining peoples' actions*'. High on the agenda of this culture change exercise were efforts to make the senior executives more visible and to abolish some of the symbols of grade and status common to the traditional financial service organisation. As far as the T&D Manager was concerned the culture within CL:

Had certainly improved ... it used to be a lot worse where ... apparently the type of chair you had said a lot about you and you know what table you had, and whether you had a picture on your wall and all that was very grade oriented. Gradually that is being eroded and here in HR none of the managers, with the exception of one manager has an office ... but you don't see that in other areas of the company at all. So there are attempts being made to get rid of the trappings of power but some people are resisting that very strongly and to be honest the Executive are the worst offenders for that now. (T&D Manager)

This statement illustrated that powerful elements of the previous culture were present in other departments, and that those at the top of the organisation's hierarchy persisted in holding on to certain elements of that culture. The T&D Manager confirmed that support from top management would ultimately determine whether such a culture change initiative will be successful in the longer term, suggesting it was the '*number one critical success factor*' for Human Resources strategies in the organisation. The fundamental need to enlist senior management commitment when changing certain aspects of the culture was illustrated by the T&D Manager when she spoke about the issue of training and development in the customer services area. It appeared that, for many of these more senior managers, customer service was not directly related to their roles. The excerpt below graphically illustrates the problems involved in changing such attitudes:

I am not responsible for it but there is a large training initiative going on in the customer service area and all the 1000+ employees will be going through this program and it is all part of the initiative in customer service. As a pre cursor to that, the executive strategy sessions that they held, ... all the senior managers were invited, but the executives were asking why do we need to do this? .. Being political is very important and being able to influence things (T&D Manager)

The T&D Manager revealed the deliberate attempts that have been made to update the culture of CL to one which was more commercially orientated and less grade conscious. However what became clear was that CL still possessed many of the characteristics of a traditional and often conservative culture associated with Scottish life assurance offices where prudence and adherence to strict practices still define many aspects of organisational life. It is important to understand that often the culture of an organisation transcends other aspects of the company and hence this issue of culture should be kept uppermost in the mind when thinking about other aspects of the company.

A7.2.3 Organisational Strategy and Management Development

When asked how organisational strategy influenced management development, the T&D Manager again emphasised the importance of senior and line management support for Human Resource Development strategies and initiatives, reiterating that senior executives do not pay enough attention to the most important employee development issues. For example, on the issue of enhancing customer service, it was pointed out that today's highly competitive environment necessitates well-trained and knowledgeable customer service representatives. The connection between management development and customer service is in essence related to managers' ability to empower front line employees. However the HR and Training Departments have been frustrated in their attempts to empower employees:

The organisation now wants to achieve something different (enhanced customer service through the IFA market) and the environment that we are operating in is much more difficult ... And they (Executive) all nod and say we know that and I think there is a lot of willingness and buy in, but that is not going to be sustained when people come back to the work place if the leading team are not supportive.

So I think management development should be influenced by organisational strategy and I think we have tried hard to make it so. But then the people who are setting the strategy are almost like impeding the process, you know I can't continue to keep blaming them but they do play a big part in it and making this succeed. It is the number one critical success factor..... but they just see it as a HR issue rather than a business issue, and the management of people they don't see that as what business is all about - they see it as a HR thing, so it is very frustrating (T&D Manager)

The T&D Manager's views on the responsibility for Management Development appeared to reinforce the evidence from those commentators who have explored these 'new psychological contracts' (Sparrow 1995). This organisational view was apparent from the following response from the T&D Manager:

Interviewer: Who has responsibility for management development? Is it individuals, Personnel, HR, Line Managers or someone else?

Certainly individuals, and at the end of the day it is like complaining that teachers don't do a good enough job, but you know parents have got to take responsibility for children and similarly we can not sit here and complain if somebody does not do this and do that. You know you have the number one responsibility for your own personal development as a manager and as an individual. So I think you know if you find that the company cannot offer you what you want and what you need then you either 'put up or shut up'. (T&D Manager)

The T&D Manager acknowledged the organisation's role in the process of developing managers, especially in the current environment where there are serious skill shortages in technical areas such as Information Systems, Legal and Compliance, Accountancy and Actuarial positions. With this in mind, the views of the mid-career managers who are professionals in these fields are all the more important to the study, particularly in the light of the recent 'churning' of staff in such professional areas. The issue of staff moving between different Life Offices in search of enhanced salaries and perks appears to be further magnified in Scotland where there are many Life Offices in a relatively small geographical area.

A7.2.4 Human Resource Development Processes

For CL there had been no official recognition from any external training accrediting bodies, but this did not mean that there was no activity in relation to these issues. In the case of Investors in People for example, the T&D Manager indicated that there was an amount of cynicism regarding the value of obtaining recognition. Nevertheless the organisation, would achieve accreditation since the practices espoused by the *IiP* National Standard were valued by the company, although the actual certification was perhaps less desirable:

A lot of research has gone into looking at the value of it [*IiP*], and I think it has come out very well in the last few years and we have talked about it but I think internally there is a lot of scepticism about it. ... So what I have decided to do is go for *IiP* but go very low key, put in place the foundations of *IiP* because it is such good practice and if we are doing those things then by default we will be ready to get *IiP* status. (T&D Manager)

In CL there was evidence of work being carried out on linking management development to skills profiling, while the task of linking skills profiles to a competencies framework was at an advanced stage. In the management development program there were attempts to identify which skill managers required for their jobs and to integrate the language of competency frameworks into any management development exercise:

Appendix Seven

Now what we are doing is trying to encourage people to see the outcomes of their skills profiling discussion a development plan which is very much linked into core skills and capability and address those gaps and we are trying to make sure that our next MD program will give very obvious - if they have a skills gap in particular that is mentioned in the framework then I can say - here's a workshop which will meet those needs. We have also planned a piece of work for this year which will link skill profiling competencies to the resources in our learning centre and other learning opportunities we have in house or out of house. So if you need to work on this particular skill you can go in and see ... a list of resources, multi-media training and workshops, outside activities, secondments, here are things you can do if you want to work on it and the same will apply to managers. (T&D Manager)

The T&D Manager was asked to clarify who made the decision on the appropriateness of opportunities for individuals whether the feedback process involved the HR department?

Interviewer: Who decides what Management Development is appropriate for an individual?

Primarily their own manager with I hope advice and support from HR. We (HR dept) would like to get involved with that and we are working quite hard on that at the moment. One of my team and I are hoping to go out and meet all the middle management population for half an hour and talk to them about where they are in terms of their own development, and what support do they need and what can we do about that. We interviewed all the senior managers after the last programme was completed and asked how was that, and what have we done to support them and what have been the barriers to them learning and we have had a few bad responses there because there has been very little support for them. (T&D Manager)

These issues of support and guidance are extremely important to this study and are closely related to the extrinsic barriers to learning discussed later.

The final part of this section exploring HRD strategies and practices in the organisation was designed to ascertain if tangible rewards were given to a manager successfully participating in formal development activities. The T&D Manager indicated that there was some formal recognition given (in the form of cash bonuses) for passing professional standards or examinations, but that this was something that appeared to be a remnant of the old organisational culture and was deliberately being eroded. Giving monetary rewards for passing formal courses did not appear to correspond to current thinking on achieving competencies:

Interviewer: Are you rewarded for meeting the standards, or for getting an MBA for example.

That's interesting - people do get bonuses as they go through their studies - they often get a completion bonus when they finish. We have actually got some of our team who ... reviewing our whole support to professional studies, which would include MBAs and FPCs and all those kinds of things. We are probably going to scrap bonuses and completion bonuses, and get people ... to actually think about what they are contributing as a result of having been through this program and if their contribution is X then they should be rewarded for that. Just because they have been through something does not mean to say that they are contributing that. (T&D Manager)

This point illustrates the intention of the organisation to move away from rewarding the basic attendance of courses to recognising the actual progression of skills.

A7.2.5 Measuring Performance Outcomes

The T&D Manager revealed that while there were fundamental ways by which performance was measured on an individual level, there was also a clear intention emanating from the HR department to make the system more comprehensive. However as with other issues mentioned previously, for example the *IiP* accreditation, the T&D Manager indicated that there was a degree of '*scepticism and nervousness*' surrounding such HR issues from certain quarters:

Interviewer: What aspects of individual performance do you measure?

Skills profiling was originally brought in for training and development and learning and people were nervous of using it for performance management purposes, which is a shame because it just makes perfect sense to do it. If people are moving along the framework and contributing more, then they should be rewarded for that but they shouldn't just be rewarded if they move from level 4 to level 5 - [the question is - so what - what did you do there?] (T&D Manager)

The HR professionals clearly want to move towards a more output driven performance measurement system, whereby managers are rewarded for their contribution.

It is important to outline the T&D Manager's position on the overall contribution of management development (MD) programmes to both individual and organisational performance and compare this with the views of the interviewed mid-career managers.

Interviewer: What contribution do you believe MD has made towards improvement of individual performance?

I would like to say more than it has but I think it has been really quite limited and patchy, which has been really unfortunate because we have spent a lot of money on MD programs. We did try to evaluate it and whilst I think there have been individual improvements and changes I would be very hard pushed to say that it equates to the money we have spent on it.

Interviewer: How about organisational performance?

Well again it is very difficult for me to answer that question - I would like to say that there have been small changes, but we used to have a very good tool for measuring that. We used to do an opinion survey which was run in 1994 and '96 and I would love it if we could do the same thing again because it measures the attitudes of staff to the whole way they were treated at work and the emphasis on quality, quantity or the way they were developed and manager's concern for things. Unfortunately the decision has been made not to repeat that, and it is a very difficult thing in that if you try to evaluate training at that sort of level - organisation level - and yet there would have been a very valuable mechanism to do that. (T&D Manager)

A7.3 Lothian Life Assurance Company

A7.3.1 Management Structure and Communication Process

The top management team in the organisation comprises eight senior executives and the Chief General Manager, making up what is described as the 'top-team'. Each of these eight senior executives is in charge of a division. The eight divisions at Lothian Life were as follows: Accounts; Actuarial; Customer Service; Investment; Marketing; Sales, Information Systems, and Personnel. Although the structure in each of these divisions is slightly different, there is a General Manager and Assistant General Managers. The broad

management level comprises assistant Managers and Superintendents or Supervisors who manage the Team Leaders.

The Training and Development Managers furnished the researcher with a list of 52 managers who fell into the mid-career manager definition (aged 35 50 years). From this document a stratified sample (based on the eight divisions¹) of thirteen managers were selected for interview, which represented 25% of the total mid-career management population in Lothian Life.

The Training and Development Manager indicated that in terms of communications and decision making processes, this office was *'not as well developed as they might be'*. Although management made most of the decisions on a day to day basis, the T&D Manager felt that, *'in reality a lot of what you might think are quite petty decisions are made at a high level so you find that General Managers have quite a lot of say in the general running of things'* (T&D Manager). The T&D Manager indicated that a major priority for the company was to 'devolve and change' so that actual decision making could be made at a lower level enabling middle managers to take more responsibility for aspects like budgeting etc.

In terms of communication in the company, every month there is a formal briefing where the Chief General Manager briefs management who then relate information to the lower levels in the organisation. The T&D Manager felt that this cascading system had improved communication within the company. In essence this system had come into operation as a result of a staff opinion survey held three years previously (repeated recently) which has identified a number of weaknesses, most pertinently where staff felt they did not really know what was going on in the company at a high level. In addition to this, new initiatives like the company intra-net have meant that there *'is a huge amount of information for people if they want it, and notices go out very fast and people see what's going on very quickly'*. The T&D Manager felt that often the success of the bottom-up communication was dependent on the different areas within the organisation and the managers' commitment within them. Some managers were described as being very good at encouraging staff to contribute ideas whilst others were not. The T&D Manager felt that a *'lack of people skills' may help to explain this situation'*. Hence, helping managers to develop these skills was a *'major priority for us as a company to develop'*. Although a number of formal processes aimed at improving such skills had been implemented, it was felt that they were not as effective as he would have liked.

¹ No managers from the Sales Division were interviewed because these managers were not based at the Head Office in Edinburgh.

A7.3.2 Organisational Culture

When asked to describe the organisational culture, the T&D Manager indicated that Lothian Life was very much *'traditional, conservative with a small 'c' and paternalistic. Given that the majority of the senior executive team for example, had worked for the company for 40 odd years and had, almost 'grown up together'* experiencing this paternalistic type culture, they have perhaps not surprisingly attempted to maintain the company's traditions. However the T&D Manager also illustrated that as a result of the rapidly changing company position, there were inherent problems involved in maintaining such a traditional culture. There was therefore the feeling that change was accepted as being inevitable:

In 1986 we had approximately 500 600 employees and 10 years later we had nearly 1500 so that's a massive expansion. That's crept back a bit but it is very easy to see why the old style of management, which did change to a certain extent as a result of the staff opinion survey, was very much focused on the old values and controlled decision making. But you have a massive company now and they (Senior Executive) are very out of touch with how staff are feeling at lower levels because it is not like when they were working where you know everyone so the culture is very traditional but we are changing that Things have changed considerably since the first opinion survey: we have changed the way we communicate to a certain extent, some of the processes have changed. We have become an Investor in People, we have a management control system which I think to a certain extent unfortunately reinforces some of the original kind of control aspects where you are taking away people's personal responsibility and telling them what to do. (T&D Manager)

In essence the T&D Manager illustrated that, against this background of continuing paternalism and tradition, there were some very powerful forces at work which were forcing the company to be far more market driven than in the past. In addition, the fact that there had recently been a new Chief General Manager appointed had added further confusion and uncertainty about the future direction of the company. As far as the T&D Manager was concerned, however, it was felt that there would certainly be *'a great deal more emphasis on developing managers'* in the company in the future.

The T&D Manager revealed that attempts had been made by the HR Department to promote the importance of people skills amongst managers. He emphasised the importance of the *'continual encouraging and motivating of people... my boss and me are very much pushing, pushing, pushing on that side of things'*. This change in emphasis resulted from the *'pretty negative feedback'* that arose from the opinion survey. This feedback provided the catalyst for the then Chief General Manager to promote a:

'New vision, and new values (I say new, they came out at the end of 1996) which really was a complete step out of the original way of doing things around here. We were actually quite aspirational in our standpoint rather than just doing what we have always done because we have been successful at it.' (T&D Manager)

The T&D Manager reiterated the vital importance of the culture in place in the organisation when he was asked if he felt that empowerment and experimentation was a

feature. As far as he was concerned, the prevalence of these factors was again influenced by individual departments and managers. He felt that an empowering philosophy underlined the thinking of the Training and Development Department, where *'it was completely that way' and 'that's where we have to go if we are really going to harness the strengths of the people here'*. However he also felt that, in certain areas, the *'old control culture'* meant that some of the longer serving managers felt that such initiatives *'had nothing to do with them'*. He summed up the situation by communicating that:

We have had a number of management development initiatives at various levels but frankly they are no good unless we have a sea change in culture overall because people first come back and nothing has changed so what's the point. There has never been a centralised standpoint taken on that - it has always been something that should happen to someone else rather than something as a company we need to do and embrace as a whole. (T&D Manager)

The above statement inherently illustrates the importance of culture in this organisation and how it may affect the processes and effectiveness of management development. The T&D Manager, however, stated that the issue of organisational culture was one of the most important barriers to learning:

I think culturally we are not a learning organisation. Formally we encourage the attainment of qualifications because we see them as being very important, like becoming an actuary, being an accountant, being qualified in pensions, whatever it is, we do look at these things as status symbols if you like. But what we don't necessarily do is look at individual skills and match them to their career aspirations and I think we're not very good at that. I hope that will change but that's about us creating the right attitude and culture towards it. (T&D Manager)

A7.3.3 Organisational Strategy and Management Development

When asked if and how organisational strategy influenced management development in Lothian Life, the T&D Manager emphasised again the fact that at the localised (divisional) level there was evidence of management skills being developed in line with their own strategies:

These are things we (at divisional level) have to achieve and therefore you need to have these skills so it is happening at a more devolved level and the reason that is happening is that we took a lot of time to introduce a training process and we used LiP to do that and it was not the other way around. (T&D Manager)

According to the T&D Manager, the emphasis placed upon tools such as management appraisals by LiP offered the company the opportunity to promote development and ensure that managers were more *'focussed on the key skills their people need to be a manager rather than just tasks that they have done.'* However he reiterated that, as far as he was concerned, *I don't think that as yet we are enlightened enough at senior management level to say that we want our managers to be like this because this is where we are going – we are not there yet'.*

In terms of taking responsibility for management development, it was shown that, in essence, there was a two tier system whereby the T&D Manager and his boss, were responsible for centralised formal management training on an organisational basis. He also pointed out that the line manager was also responsible for their own management development activity and that of their employees. As the following statement illustrates, this system was not centralised but very much driven by the needs of those at a more local level:

But the line manager level is also where decisions are made and these at the moment are where the bulk of management development courses are run. We get individual training needs back and we (T&D Department) deliver against these training needs according to what they perceive their needs are in that local area. It is not a centralised theme, but more as you need it, it's needs driven. (T&D Manager)

A7.3.4 Human Resource Development Processes

Although the company's training and development processes had been recently recognised by Investors in People, the T&D Manager felt that it was still too early for the company to consider applying for any National Training Awards for MD, believing this to be an *'area ... for the future.'* In his view, there was still clearly an inadequacy amongst managers in terms of their people skills. He detected a *'lack of confidence, frankly, to manage people.'* As far as he was concerned, there were a number of particularly useful aspects of the IiP accreditation process. Firstly it ensured that appropriate structures (management appraisal system) were put in place which would allow the company to build and enhance its MD:

IIP did recognise that, that we had a vested interest in developing people - which we do - but what it didn't necessarily do is look at how we manage people. I do think that that is something we will be moving more towards now we have a management appraisal and as I mentioned before I think that will become a theme this year. With the new chief executive I said, frankly if we really want to make use of what we have achieved so far we have got to look at the people there and keep pushing them. (T&D Manager)

Secondly, it was stressed that the *'top managers'* perceived gaining IiP as a *'good thing to get'*. But as the T&D manager emphasised, IiP was very much driven by the HR department, *'because it offered us the opportunity to justify making changes so it was a means to an end for us not an end in itself.'* An additional indication that appropriate structures and practices were in place was the fact that the SQA had awarded the company with the approved certificate to deliver a number of NVQs. As far as the T&D manager could see, this was *'obviously a rubber stamp that we have got the processes in place to do that.'*

There was also clear evidence that LL were using a competence based approach when considering the development needs of managers. For the T&D Manager the introduction of competence wholesale across the company was described as the *'major part of the game plan'*. To this end, a pilot competency framework was in operation at the point of data

collection. The aim was to ensure that eventually every individual would understand what competences they needed to do their jobs, from generic 'lone competences' (appropriate for every person in the organisation regardless of area) to those more specialised ones:

So management skills increase as you go up and the job specific skills so that we actually map out every single job that everyone does in the company and then identify them in competency terms. And then the ultimate will be in 2 years time, maybe even a years time when we have a competency matrix on line such that we are able to identify training needs and have the gaps clearly identified. We will have line managers trained as overseers to identify who has what skills so that you can be more flexible about resource management. (T&D Manager)

The T&D Manager indicated that the MCI competency framework was informally used as a basis for designing the competences listed in the management appraisal system, with a view to formalising the framework in the future. It was felt that by using the competences as devised by both the SVQ and MCI, and selecting those that were most appropriate for managers within LL, a comprehensive management appraisal system could be established.

As with the other interviews with the company representatives responsible for Training and Development, this manager was asked both to clarify what was expected of managers in terms of development activities and to ascertain who had responsibility for deciding on the appropriate MD for individuals. In response to this question the T&D Manager reiterated that the HR Department was involved in identifying core skills for managers and, ultimately in giving them the opportunity to develop those skills. The annual appraisal was also deemed important as far as managers' developmental needs were concerned:

On a local specific basis, development needs are now identified as a result of a discussion at the beginning of every year in relation to the setting of objectives between the line manager and the individual to agree what it is that they need that year to support them in achieving these objectives. So it is very specific objective driven and I would underline the word agreement there. So the individual has responsibility for identifying what they think they need and then discussing it with a manager and then coming to an agreement about whether it is appropriate or not. (T&D Manager)

As well as this system of working in partnership with line managers, the T&D Manager also emphasised the growing need for managers themselves to take ownership of their future skills and career development:

Also something we will be encouraging is very much the thing that individuals are responsible for their own career development and that is one of the reasons why we will probably be removing bonuses from exam results and emphasising this as something that people should be professionally pursuing as part of their own interest rather than for the sake of a few pounds. (T&D Manager)

By mentioning this issue of financial rewards for obtaining qualifications the T&D Manager went some way towards answering the final question in this section. This question was designed to ascertain if tangible rewards were given to managers for successfully completing formal development interventions. It was indicated that, in effect, there was a dual system in operation whereby for certain qualifications, such as actuarial (FFA), Insurance (ACII) or Accountancy (CA), an ascribed status was awarded, while for other qualifications, for example the sales orientated AFPC, there may be a *'bonus of a couple of hundred pounds'*. However it was indicated that this practice was being eroded, the view from the organisation being that taking examinations was *'a demonstration of professional desire to move on and the reward [would] be as and when'*. In essence the T&D manager communicated that the removal of such rewards was integral to the continuing moves to overhaul the pay and reward strategy:

What I would say is that we are rewording our pay and reward strategy this year and if I had to say, I would think we will be basing it a lot more on competence, simply because gone are the days when people can move on, we have got so many different levels - 11 grades before you get to management, so the chances are that the number of grades will be reduced and there will be far more emphasis on how much skill you have. So you are paid for your expertise rather than the length of service, obviously they are linked, but you know, you have got to this level and therefore you are paid this much, 'why did he get to that level' so we will look at your expertise. So that fits in very well with the competency approach we are taking which will drive the appraisal which in turn will drive the pay and so on. (T&D Manager)

A7.3.5 Measuring Performance Outcomes

When asked about performance measurement, the T&D Manager stated that assessment was purely against objectives and that there was an element of subjectivity involved. Not surprisingly, the subjective nature of measuring performance had been widely criticised in the past as it was not deemed to offer a *'solid foundation for management performance related pay'*. He did however feel that, as a result of the introduction of the new (MCI based) appraisal form, the assessment of performance for managers was, *'very much more objective because they are actually looking at specific skill levels.'*

In terms of team performance, it was emphasised that while team objectives were the principal tool of measurement, there were plans to base evaluation on the performance of divisions. An important point to note was that the T&D Manager realised that, if performance measurement was to work well, then there would have to be clear links made between both individual and team levels. With this in mind, the T&D Manager illustrated the importance of the process by which training needs were identified and the necessity of ensuring that appropriate opportunities were in place:

Every year we have an exercise where managers sit down, line managers at every level, with their reportees and they agree what training needs they have for that year. If anyone feels they haven't got something it is discussed at that time and it is dealt with by line managers and indeed it is their responsibility to deal with the development of their staff. So on an area basis, we will have training needs for the whole company for the year so we will be able to identify exactly what we have to do and plan our resources and do our stuff right now. If there are any themes coming out we can deliver courses against those - it's as simple as that. We find out what they want and we deliver so there are no reasons why there should be any complaints because they are given every opportunity to ask for what they need, we don't dictate the training, we are dictated to. (T&D Manager)

A7.4 Grampian Life Assurance Company

A7.4.1 Management Structure and Communication Process

At the head of the organisation is the Group Chief Executive and his direct reports who are the: Finance Director; Marketing and Sales Director, HR Director and, Client Services (operations) Director. The Grampian Life umbrella includes the Investment Management organisation (GLIM) which is effectively a separate body with its own Chief Executive. These seven directors effectively make up the Executive who are charged with making the executive and strategic decisions for the direction of Grampian Life. Five members of this executive grouping are on the main board of GL along with other directors.

Below the Executive, there are the divisions which are made up of: Finance, Marketing and Sales (both direct and indirect); Human Resources (with training and Personnel as well as facilities management who look after the buildings etc.); Operations (which is made up of client services, IT, actuarial and joint venture activities), and Investment. Each of these divisions has what are called Divisional Boards, which are chaired by the Executive Board Director and comprise the senior management of that division along with two non-divisional Board Members. The aim of this arrangement is to provide an '*external view*' on what is happening within each division and, hence, placed on the HR Divisional Board are the Heads of IT and Client Services. By way of summing up, the Group T & D Manager illustrated how a common thread based on goals and objectives ran through the organisation from each individual to the Executive:

So, the executive do the strategy, the heads of the divisions are tasked with making the operations happen. Each year we have a corporate plan for the organisation, we have a 3 and 5 year plan as well, and the annual plan is agreed and each division has its plan to contribute to the business direction. From the divisional plan, each of us has personal objectives to be able to deliver the overall corporate goal. So the corporate goal links all the way through. We have an appraisal system that measures all of that through the business cycle. Group T & D Manager)

In terms of communication within Grampian Life, the Group T & D Manager felt that real efforts were being made to ensure that communication '*cascades down and feeds upwards.*' At the top of the organisation, each year, the Executive have a two day '*away day*'

session to determine the strategic direction for the following year and each division feeds into that meeting through their general manager who has the opportunity both before the two days and after to contribute on behalf of his/her division. The divisions then meet to identify what they require to be able to contribute to the *'top level goals'* that have been decided by the Executive. Each month, the Executive and senior managers review the overall goals and then all the staff are briefed on the progress against the objectives by their divisional boards. These briefs are written and cascaded through e-mail, which is distributed to all staff. Each department also have their own regular meetings which serve to feed information up to the monthly divisional board meetings. There is an annual managerial conference to which all team leaders are invited and there is also a staff conference for all staff. In addition to these two events, the Group T&D Manager stated that in the last two or three years there had been two *'Question Times'* ... *where we have the Executive up on stage and the audience, whoever wants to come, can question them on any issue they like. This can be from the most clerical member of staff, all the way through.'*

A7.4.2 Organisational Culture

When asked about the culture, the first thing that the Group T&D Manager stated was that GL was now *'a financial services organisation, [whereas in the past] we were a Life Assurance Company'*, and therefore there was an enormous amount of change in the culture. He felt that the best way to describe the culture was that it was *'flexible, fast-acting, can-do, very business focussed but also heavily people focussed.... Extremely customer focused and that's the key phrase for the organisation.'* Basically he felt that the change had involved moving away from being product focussed *'because products are easy to copy'* to one where the employees play an increasingly central role in the organisation. Therefore he felt that there had been efforts to make the people within the organisation *'one of the differentiators'* because their skills and talents could not be imitated in the way that products and services (e.g. banking) could.

The Group T&D Manager also felt that another cornerstone of the GL culture was the fact that the staff felt more empowered and that this empowering had developed recently, enabling managers and team leaders to take on different duties. Therefore he felt that team leaders were now more likely to be coaches and mentors rather than the traditional technician *'that took charge of the most complex technical cases'*. He summed up, *'That's the biggest change we're seeing in the culture of the organisation, that we do need people to have good management skills who are highly customer focussed and goal orientated.'*

When the Group T&D Manager was asked about how he perceived the culture in relation to training and development, he pointed out that it had become very competency driven, with lists of both behavioural and technical competencies for each job. (Issues surrounding competency are discussed in section A7.4.). In more general terms he stated that GL was very much focussed on encouraging employees to *'go down the professional qualifications route for a particular profession.'* He mentioned the importance of encouraging managers to undertake the MBA route. Backing this statement up was the evidence that an in-house GL College was being opened up to facilitate continuous professional development and continuous learning. He summed up the situation:

And we're saying to them, well we'll put an infrastructure in and some time, if you're prepared to put some of your own personal time into it as well. What we'll then allow you to do is develop a skill or knowledge that may not necessarily be needed for your current job but it's something that an employability language might help you for the future, hopefully in Grampian Life. But if not, for elsewhere, and we take that seriously now because we have been through a downsizing some time back and what we want to be sure of is that people do have skills that they can use in other types of jobs. (Group T & D Manager)

Continuing on this theme, the Group T&D Manager emphasised the importance of multi skilling (to GL) and described in some detail how efforts were made to ensure that people did get the opportunity to move around in the organisation:

Every year we meet the members of the Executive twice a year from HR and we look at people in career terms, where do we think they're going next. We have what we call a chart room and we put up the structure chart with every manager on that and we look at every possible movement between divisions - who do we have coming through for this position, what training and development are we going to give them. (Group T & D Manager)

This final statement, perhaps more than any other, illustrated that there was a very real emphasis placed on development and giving all employees the chance to continually develop and move forward in the organisation.

A7.4.3 Organisational Strategy and Management Development

In answering the question: *Does Organisational Strategy influence MD?*, the Group T&D Manager offered some interesting (pieces of) information. As was mentioned before, key to the strategy setting process for GL was the yearly corporate plans, which were drawn up by the Executive with clear input from the divisions. The Group T&D Manager intimated that a vital part in this process was the formulation of a 'Manpower Plan' which determined the numbers and skill that the organisation required to achieve the goals laid out in the corporate plan. From this Manpower Plan, the training and development needs for the period were devised:

So every piece of training that we do has as an end result the corporate objectives of the organisation, so if it's communications skills or whatever we're producing, it's for a purpose. So when we do our objectives, and every manager has objectives - 3 or 4 key objectives - and each objective gets linked to the corporate plan of the organisation and what are the drivers, or 'ho chin' as the Japanese call it. So management development and training links in to all of that. The first thing we do in training department is ask what is the corporate objective business strategy for the organisation, what training do we need to provide to match that, then that comes down to individuals within the organisation, what training do they need to do their current job, their future and the business objectives - it's interlinked.

Perhaps the most salient point communicated by the T&D Manager, in relation to the inter linking of organisational strategy and HR strategy, was the importance of training and development.

At this stage the Group T&D Manager proceeded to explain in detail the whole philosophy of the GL manpower planning and training strategy. The most important requirement for the continued success of the organisation was to ensure that training and development were built into the manpower planning process and were elevated to the same level of importance as the other elements of *'delivering the business, holidays and sickness.'* He suggested that one of the main ways of achieving this was to be as flexible as possible in delivering training and development:

Training and development has primarily been seen as you're only actually receiving training if you're going to a training course, away from the desk. We see learning as something that can take place at your desk by gaining different experience, it can take place in a tutor environment, and we're still encouraging that, we're much more multi-media now - distance learning. We're looking now to Internet and intra net to be able to give that learning opportunity and that can be at the desk, or in a learning centre. (Group T & D Manager)

The main problem was for the training and development department *'getting people released to actually do that [training and development].'* The T&D Manager also mentioned the fact that the timing of training and development activities had changed to be *'more modular and short burst in nature'* in order to make it easier for employees to attend and not be away from their departments for long periods of time.

Closely related to these issues of making training more flexible and user friendly was the question of how much responsibility the individual had for their own training and development. The Group T&D Manager illustrated the tri-partite nature of the GL system. First and foremost, it became apparent that the individual had been given much more responsibility for the *'identification and policing'* of their development. However it was also clear that line managers have considerable responsibility (through the annual appraisal mechanism) to ensure that their teams were developed, *'if they don't do that, they won't be doing their job fully.'* The final partner in this system is the Training and Development Department, whose job is to *'facilitate that it all happens, [so we have to have] the systems and programmes in place to bring the parties together to talk about it'*. To further emphasise how serious

training was taken by the (Training and Development) Department, it was also shown that each division had an advisor whose role was to help identify relevant opportunities and advise the divisions on the availability of such opportunities.

Another key element of the MD strategy at GL was the existence of what were known as '*Career Development Centres*' (CDCs), which had been set up for team leaders, managers and senior managers. The aim of these centres was to '*allow the individual to measure their competence against the competence profile of a team leader, a manager or a senior manager and get feedback and a development programme of what they need to gain more experience and more development.*' To ensure that this process worked effectively, the individual was required to apply through their line manager and it was equally imperative that he/she was supportive of the initiative.

The final aspect of the Training and Development strategy that the Group T&D Manager felt was important to mention, was that, as a result of the change programme '*Gear up for Change*', a mentoring system was introduced. Crucial to its success was the informal nature of the scheme, where people identified as being in key '*influential*' positions (mainly managers or team leaders) were assigned mentors outside the line of management of those individuals. The T&D Manager stated that it was primarily the actuarial students who had the opportunity to partake in mentoring of a more formal nature.

A7.4.4 Human Resource Development Processes

At the time of the data collection in GL, the position as an Investor in People had recently been consolidated in that they had reaffirmed that status after being recognised firstly three years previously. The most important aspect of GL's commitment to achieving IiP status was not '*because of the award, we went for it because of the principles and we wanted to have a strategy that the staff could feel that there was something they were going to measure against the outside world on how we were doing.*'

In the year before the data collection took place, GL had, for the first time, undertaken a National Training Award for telephone sales techniques in the customer services area. The Group T&D Manager indicated that the organisation had also successfully achieved the bronze, silver and gold ISO quality accreditation scheme for thirty work units. Therefore, it was obvious that quality was a major issue and the group T&D Manager ultimately described it as being '*really important to us*'. As well as these training and quality awards, the fact that GL had also won several IFA and Life Assurance industry awards for improved customer service was also mentioned.

Appendix Seven

As was mentioned in section A7.4.2, it was clear that competency frameworks were integral to the training and development activities of employees at GL. It was stressed that when the competency based system was initiated, the T&D department used the Vocational Qualifications (VQ) model of competencies as well as the management competencies from the Management Charter Initiative. It was indicated that GL was able to award VQs for customer service through the Training Department and the Group T&D Manager was hopeful that this ability could be extended to other types of internal training which could be validated by external bodies. For example, he asserted that GL was in talks with various Business Schools to verify whether other parts of training could go towards academic qualifications such as an MBA.

In terms of the actual mechanics of how the competency system worked, any new or existing job was profiled in competence terms (i.e. skills, behaviours or attitudes). The annual appraisal system was then used to measure how far the individual had used the competencies in the job and there is feedback from managers and direct reports through the 360-degree system. To sum up the use of competencies, the T&D Manager stated *'the competencies drive the whole way forward: the recruitment; doing the job; training and development and future career development. All the learning centres and the career development centres are competence based.'*

The final question in this section was designed to ascertain whether tangible rewards were given to managers for successfully completing formal development interventions. It was indicated that the Performance Management system in GL was based on the business objectives and they were the *'driver of the system'*, although the Group T&D Manager did state that this system was similar to the competencies one. The performance of managers was based on three or four key objectives, which were related to the corporate aims. Very simply it was shown that *'if at the end of the year you measure up all your objectives and they've all been achieved, you should have achieved your proper goals and if you haven't there'll be a gap that we should recognise.'* Based on these objectives, a non-pensionable bonus was paid once a year in addition to one's salary that was based on the on going key aspects of the job year-on-year. Ultimately:

[the salary was] market comparable in what we are paying in the outside market place - it's not driven on the "you'll get this increase every year" and it's very much performance driven as well and within the organisation we have the objective to pay high performers the highest level of salary and the bonus, so yes, the competencies drive the accountabilities and the objectives but we don't pay the objectives at all (Group T & D Manager)

With regards to the rewards available for attaining an MBA, for example, it was noted that, while tuition fees were paid and a bonus was awarded on completion, the salary was still primarily performance based.

A7.4.5 Measuring Performance Outcomes

When asked more specifically about performance measurement, the Group T&D Manager reiterated that the real drivers were the objectives set, which he described as being *'time bounded'* and *'cost bounded'*. He then advised that, at the year end, the appraisal system was then used to identify the objectives achieved against the performance indicators. In terms of team and departmental performance management, although there was encouragement for cross-divisional work, payment was still based on individual performance.

In the last question in this section, the Group T&D Manager was asked to comment on the impact that MD had made towards improving individual and departmental performance. In responding, he was adamant that MD was having a significant impact, not least in its contribution to the culture of the company:

[Changing from] a life office environment into being a financial services organisation with GL Bank, GL International, our own credit card, we're working now in joint venture scenarios the skill base in the organisation has widened considerably and training and development is taking us down that line.
(Group T & D Manager)

In addition, he underlined the general philosophy that appeared to transcend the organisation by stating that *'training [was] not seen as a cost ... it [was] seen as an investment in the individual and for the organisation.'* The impact of training and development has also been identified as a prime factor in the attainment of awards recently attained.

The Group T&D Manager forwarded a very pertinent observation noting that a lack of *'willingness'* and *'hunger'* for increased personal development often due to their past success, a common view being: *'I've got to this level, have I anything else to learn?'* With this in mind, the Group T&D Manager felt that an integral part of his role was to encourage and facilitate learning amongst this managerial group:

I often use the comparison that if you go to your doctor, would you be comfortable that he was using his knowledge from 1980 or 1970 and the answer is always no - so why shouldn't our customers feel the same.... Barriers are certainly the pressures on people on the job to make the time so we need to encourage the individual to take more responsibility to make that happen. It's just like the appraisal scenario, people say to you, 'I haven't been appraised', and you say to them well have you demanded it and they say 'oh, no I was waiting'. That's a big change that's happening in training and development terms, it was often recognised in culture terms as something that was done to you and we've moved away from that and people are now looking more to get it for themselves and for the organisation
(Group T & D Manager)

A7.5 Borders Life Assurance Company

A7.5.1 Management Structure and Communication Process

BL is part of an International group, Financial Services Conglomerate (FSC), based on mainland Europe, but which has other business units in other European Countries and around the world. BL is a substantial unit within that group and there are three representatives from FSC on the main BL Board and as the T&D Manager stated *'this is the only noticeable effect that anyone could see from FSC on BL.'*

In relation to the actual structure of BL in the UK it was noted that there are a number of Sub-Boards and an Executive group of people who are made up of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Marketing Executive, Operational Director, Information Systems, as well as the HR Executive etc. The main aim at this Executive level is to set the strategic direction of BL in the UK and then liaise with FSC Head Office about these proposed strategies. Essentially the main responsibility of the Executive and a key objective is to ensure that areas such as Sales, Marketing and Customer Service, what the T&D Manager described as the *'front end and back end'* are working in tandem and pulling in the same direction. In terms of further down the hierarchy it was shown that a series of managers in each department who reported directly to these Board Executives. Directly below these there were Assistant Managers and Team Leaders followed by the Team Members. The T&D Manager did not indicate the numbers of managers at each level.

When asked about the communication process in the company he described quite an innovative and comprehensive process where there were quarterly briefings from the CEO and his colleagues who make up the Executive to the managers. As well as these there were monthly written briefings from the Executive level to all employees, but probably the most important and therefore considered to be the main communication tool are the monthly team briefings from the team and department managers to their team members.

In terms of other more innovative methods, use was made of staff magazines, and *'imaginatively titled'* newsletters in the various departments like Marketing News, Sales News or Service News, which are all, edited at a central point to ensure consistency and maintain standards. As well as these newsletters, *'Business TV'* was another tool in the communications process whereby Executive Managers in the organisation broadcast to senior managers in the branches, every six to ten weeks or sometimes more depending on the need. A feature of these broadcasts is their interactive nature whereby those managers in the sales offices can use the telephone to ask questions during the transmission.

A7.5.2 Organisational Culture

The T&D manager felt that the culture of BL was 'informal yet focused', and that the company knew exactly what it did well and how to leverage its core competence. The main aspect here was that BL had clearly focussed its culture on carving out a clear product structure involving *Retirement Planning Products (Pensions)* which was built on a distribution strategy where only Independent Financial Advisors (IFAs) were used with no interest in using Call Centres or Direct Sales methods. While the T&D manager thought that this deliberately focussed and '*narrow niche strategy*' had served the company well in that past, because of the fiercely competitive nature of the industry in the future, he felt that BL would inevitably change.

When asked more directly about the actual internal mechanics of the culture, for example if such things as empowerment or experimentation were considered features, the T&D Manager again underlined the informality of BLs culture. He pointed out that there had not been any real formal drives for empowerment and stated that he had:

Never heard the phrase apart from in casual conversation ... nobody ever said that this is something we are going to do, empower and enable or staff, but in reality I feel that our managers in particular and staff are largely empowered. (T&D Manager)

More specifically when asked about the culture of BL in terms of training and development by quoting a series of statistics the T&D Manager underlined the fact that to him there was a very well developed culture in place. He stated that at the time of the interview there were an estimated 672 people in the company studying for an examination, which represented a figure of around one in four, which although mostly voluntary, was all funded by the company. He felt that the company really did value learning and there was a real willingness to see people gain professional (ACII, actuarial, law, MBAs and Executive Secretarial) and similar qualifications. However perhaps more importantly he underlined that what summed up the culture better was that there was also a genuine enthusiasm from the staff, who are giving up their own time to study.

If there was a weakness in the company the T&D Manager, who reiterated his desire to be honest, was that there could have been more guidance and direction for staff in terms of the available opportunities. He felt that whilst BL was good at allowing people to take time off and to take charge of their own development, there should be more input from the company about what employees should be thinking about in terms of development and learning.

A7.5.3 Organisational Strategy and Management Development

When asked if he felt that organisational strategy influenced MD in BL the T&D Manager stated that he did not think it did, and in reality MD was a fairly ad hoc process. The reason for this he believed was that the success of the company had been built in the past by managers who were experts in a particular area, i.e. lawyers, accountants, actuaries, marketing and IT professionals, but in the main these managers were not necessarily good general managers.

As the T&D Manager he understood the need for an improvement in this scenario, but he stressed that great care had to be taken in any MD strategy designed to build general management expertise. He felt that general management skills would have to be built, on top of and be complimentary, to the technical and functional expertise already in place amongst the managerial group. With this in mind the T&D Manager outlined that there were definite plans to draw up a competency framework which would allow managers to begin to develop more in terms of their people skills, but still underline the fact that technical competence is very important too.

When asked about responsibility for MD, the T&D Manager reiterated that really the individual was key (with some input from direct line manager) to any process to decide what and how much development and training they want to undertake. It was felt that here was also a role for Personnel and Training Department to play and they had a definite interest in the process, but this was more as a supporting role and, ultimately the individual made the final decision. The T&D Manager again realised that there were obvious weaknesses in this system, just as there were with the culture, because there probably was not enough guidance or training given to individual about what exactly they should be doing, and often they were, *'left to their own devices'*. He summed up that, *'it an individuals responsibility for development] isn't spelt out for them in any detail and because of that there are some who will exercise that responsibility well and others who just do not'*.

A7.5.4 Human Resource Development Processes

It was indicated that BL had been recognised by IiP, but had not received any National training Awards. The IT department however had also been rewarded ISO 9000, but that was not applicable to other areas within the organisation. As was mentioned previously there was practically no use made of competency frameworks (except for Recruitment and Selection) in BL, although there had been moves to introduce similar frameworks in other processes throughout the organisation, although no detailed general plan had yet being

drafted. However there were definite plans to introduce a development centre approach and there were pilots ongoing at present in developing this further to ensure that managers will be able to have access to appropriate tools in these centres. It was also shown that there were plans to redesign the performance management appraisal system to appraise everyone on competencies. (The issue of performance management is discussed in more detail in the next section.)

In the final questions of this section surrounding HRD processes the T&D manager reiterated that all managers were expected to participate in MD activities but again there was no clear policy on this. Also the fact that often they did not receive sufficient guidance about what is expected of them and this lead to obvious problems because confusion can become inherent at lower levels too regarding MD expectations. For example the T&D Manager felt that: *For line managers in relation to those who report to them, if Manager A does not know what is expected of him/her – it is difficult for them to give some focus to others about what they should do'.*

A7.5.5 Measuring Performance Outcomes

The main aspect of the performance management system in BL was centred on the appraisal process where individual objectives are set and ultimately it is the achievement of these objectives that determines the level of salary. In the appraisal system there were: *'four guaranteed points in the annual clock [consisting of]: setting the plan; after three months internal review; six months later full appraisal, three months later interim review and a full year later a full appraisal'.* During that time it was indicated that some objectives may come on or is taken off the list of objectives depending on circumstances.

A half yearly bonus is paid based on the performance against the objectives up to the first six monthly appraisal review. Achieving an objective could for example be related to passing formal examinations. As well as such specific objectives, success in more generic skills is also measured like problem solving or communication. Deliberate attempts are made to ensure that the actual area where the individual works is recognised, therefore if the he/she worked in an area that was very technical, then the more technical objectives are weighted higher in importance than other softer ones like communication skills for that individual.

In terms of team and departmental performance attempts are made to monitor team targets which can take a variety of forms depending on the actual area where one works. For example in the investment department a measure maybe related to return on monies

invested, or in the customer services department it could be related to the number of call throughput or pieces of correspondence dealt with. However these team measures do not make any difference to the individual's final salary.

In the last question in this section the T&D Manager was asked to comment on the benefits that MD had made towards improving individual and departmental performance. He felt that it was very hard to actually evaluate just how much contribution MD had made in the past. It was stated that there were real efforts to attempt to measure all the training that took place in BL, whether it was MD or not:

We have tried to do this in financial terms, for example, managing projects to try to determine the value of the successful achievement of that project in terms of money saved or revenue gained and try to apportion some of that to the management development that went on within it. But that ends up sometimes as guesswork and I'm not so sure it is that good, it gives some pointers but in the end nothing more. (T&D Manager)

The T&D Manager went on to point out that he was trying to get the whole issue of evaluation in relation to MD raised further up the agenda when considering any projects in BL. He communicated that whilst most managers accepted that there was need for evaluating the development that they had undertaken they almost always thought it is something to be left until it is completed, after the event has taken place. He felt that evaluation of the MD should be ongoing and even performs a role before the event take place, at the planning stage.

To conclude this interview, like the Group T&D Manager from GL, the T&D Manager here forwarded some very salient observations in relation to barriers to learning for mid career managers in this organisation. For him (giving the organisational perspective), he would have expected the issue of time pressures, from both domestic and professional life, to be probably the most important for managers in this age group:

There will be a displacement effect for such managers where they do not have enough time, with high domestic responsibilities too. This is a time when the organisation is trying to get maximum input from them and they have to give up the idea of developing themselves and focus for today not tomorrow. There is disinclination on the part of managers to recognise that people should be taken out of the daily grind to be re tuned so that tomorrow they are better managers as a consequence. (T&D Manager)

As well as this issue of pressure the T&D Manager also felt that there were clear problems in this direction in terms of direction and it was now very hard to offer managers the prospects for promotion because often there is no clear series of steps anymore. Also there is disincentives because earning a few grades further up the hierarchy are not particularly higher than where they may presently be. He also clearly pointed out that in his opinion there was no '*job for life*' anymore and it was important to point out to all managers that they must develop now and understand a new philosophy centring on '*employability for*

lf'. He felt that this perceptual barrier was probably one of the hardest to remove, but that all managers and employees had to understand that they must continue to develop if they are to continue to be employable.

A7.6 Highland Life Assurance Company

A7.6.1 Management Structure and Communication Process

It was indicated that within HL there was an Executive Body, who effectively runs the company. This Executive Body is made up of a group of General Managers (GMs) who number 12 in total. Directly below these GMs are what those titled Assistant General Managers (AGMs) who number 30 in total and report directly to a GM, and combined these 30 AGMs make up what is described as the '*bottom of the Executive*'. For each major division there is a GM and AGM. These divisions are: Customer Services (one of the largest); Sales (again very large in terms of number of staff and split into both Direct Sales and IFA Sales); Information Services Division and, finally an Investment Division.

HL also had recently opened (during data collection) a Banking Division (HLB) but it should be pointed out that this was a separate company and therefore there was no representative on the main HL Executive Body from HLB.

In terms of the decision making and communication processes in place in HL the MD Consultant described a fairly typical system where the Executive Body have regular meetings which are essentially designed to facilitate the setting of corporate strategy. The Executive then communicate these strategies to the next management tier (AGMs) through regular meetings and thereafter it is really the responsibility of these AGMs to brief further downwards. As well as this standard communication process within divisions and departments there are other methods normally led by the AGM or GM. The MD Consultant felt that these other methods might take the form of '*fairly informal get togethers*' or more formal department days. In addition to these methods it was shown that there is also ongoing regular communication through the internal e-mail system.

Another element of the communication system was the Company Newsletter, which is distributed to everyone in the organisation. Also the MD Consultant mentioned the various conferences for managers in the company which are held once a year. For example there is the Executive Conference, which is relatively small, as well as the Managers Conference that is designed to include everyone from middle manager upwards. She noted that in a company with over 7000 employees it would be practically impossible to have an event that includes all employees. When pressed about what exactly she meant by middle

managers, her reply further illustrated the problems of locating individual positions in the hierarchy of such a large company as HL:

It's extremely difficult to say [description of middle manager] because it's such a big company and the parlance across divisions can also differ. The Executive as a body is considered the senior management of the company. The next level down across say 3 grading bands would be considered senior managers. The next level down from that across perhaps the next 3 or 4 grading bands would be called middle managers. It's not particularly meaningful because we are considering abolishing the grading system, which will make it even more difficult to define a person in terms of their management status, and we are moving away from that. In general terms, the idea of a middle manager would be someone who has responsibility either for managing people or for managing a substantial project and that could be anything from a Team Leader to an Independent Specialist or Expert running project groups or perhaps a project on their own with a small number in support. (MD Consultant)

A7.6.2 Organisational Culture

The most important aspect that the MD Consultant communicated about the culture were the official attempts that have been made to change and mould it to make it more customer oriented. The background of this deliberate attempt to move the shift the emphasis of the culture was related to the feedback that HL got from a survey, carried out a number of years previously, which showed that HL was *'arrogant and difficult to work with'*.

The way the change has been facilitated was through an initiative called Total Customer Satisfaction (TCS). During the TCS campaign every individual in the organisation from Chief Executive down went through a process designed to change their attitudes and orientation. The TCS process was delivered through a series of daylong participative and interactive courses and workshops by company trainers from the People Development Department, and other line managers who were specially trained to facilitate the process. After this initial day there was also a follow up event to further reinforce what had been covered in the initial course.

It was the view of the MD Consultant that this had led to significant change in the culture of HL, and she noted that the Chief Executive had also made similar statements and the enormous change that had been brought about through TCS. For the MD Consultant another indicator of how well the TCS campaign had worked was evidenced through a series of external indicators. For example it was shown that IFAs now rated HL much higher now than before in terms of customer service, and also an award for telephone service had just been won by HL. The comments below further illustrate how strongly she felt about the culture as a result of the TCS process:

In my view as someone who's only been in the company about 18 months comparing it with a number of other nationals and multi nationals with whom I've worked, I would say we have a strong learning culture in this organisation (MD Consultant)

To follow up on this point about the learning orientation of the company the MD Consultant was asked if she could *'go so far as describe HL as a Learning Organisation'*²? Her reply to this question showed that in HL there was indeed good reason for arguing that learning and development was something that was becoming ingrained in the organisation, and as can be seen from the following comments there appeared to be a very wide range of opportunities for staff at all levels in the organisation:

Well certainly Highland Life would be viewed in this way because there are an enormous number of resources available. If we just consider TCS for example, there aren't many companies who would put 7000 employees through a training programme so we're looking at the total number of days spent on training compared with other organisations I would say that BL is very much a learning organisation. We have a number of (OALCs) which are Open Access Development Centres and they're available to everyone who works in the company. They are learning areas which carry not only the quality press and a whole range of Professional Journals. Also staff are capable of learning a number of things through CD Rom reference and access to what will be the Internet when its up and running. In addition we have core training modules which are offered on a corporate basis. On top of that there are a whole load of developmental training initiatives. We have a Graduate Management Training Scheme as well as other training schemes and Management Development. So we have a huge investment in training. (MD Consultant)

In terms of other aspects of the corporate culture, the MD Consultant was asked if she felt that empowerment or experimentation was a feature of the organisation? In answer to this question the MD Consultant revealed a very telling insight into the type of culture in place. She felt that there was very little chance that anyone would like to describe any aspect of HL's operations as *'experimental'* because of the connotations of such a word and the fact that in her opinion *'people would not want us experimenting with their savings'*. She emphasised that the Financial Services Sector and Life Assurance in particular was an *'intrinsically cautious, conservative and slow moving'* business and therefore would have to say that experimentation was not a feature of the company. In terms of empowerment, she felt that there might have been some movement on that, but again in quite a restricted way, because it was still very apparent that individuals have to be thoroughly trained before they are allowed to administer pensions etc.

One the other hand the MD Consultant also pointed out that in recent years there has been some loosening of the most conservative elements of the culture for example the brightest graduates being promoted and given a lot of responsibility quite early in their careers. Also there was evidence of looking outwith the industry slightly more and if the word *'experimentation [was translated very loosely]'* she felt that the company would now be more willing

² A Learning Organisation was clarified for the MD Consultant as a 'place where there would be no real formal barriers laid down to someone if they wanted to take up a course i.e. nothing would really stop them from doing that.

to 'consider the potential benefits of looking externally and seeing what is going on and maybe learning the lessons from other very successful companies and seeing if they can be applied to our company [HL]'

By way of rounding off this section relating to the culture of HL the MD Consultant was asked about the culture more specifically connected to Management Development and Learning. In her response she illustrated the ways in which development activities were delivered to managers which she felt were more innovative compared to other companies. For example she talked about how the People Development Department worked with experienced managers to try to:

'adapt an approach that [was] most appropriate for them, normally something highly participative, using their experience and that challenges them. Therefore it is very rarely lecture based and mostly highly interactive but really the aim [was] to use whatever was appropriate, be that case study based, role playing skills development, business simulation or outdoor development. (MD Consultant)

Also as a final appendix in relation to MD in the company she noted that it was very encouraging for such a traditionally conservative company to have moved so quickly in relation to MD in recent years. She felt that MD was very much more on the agenda than before and *'before TCS it would have been given a much lower profile'*. She also felt it was important to point out that although there was still emphasis placed on professional actuarial qualifications, there had been considerable movement in relation to all forms of development for managers.

A7.6.3 Organisational Strategy and Management Development

When asked how organisational strategy influenced the Management Development strategies and processes that were in place in HL the MD Consultant gave some very interesting and informative information. She communicated clear evidence that both were linked and that ultimately each influenced each other but in her opinion MD underpinned corporate strategy and if they were not the case *'you're doing something for no good reason other than developing people.'* The MD Consultant clearly emphasised that any 'MD trust' had to start with the corporate objectives where the *'development and training is then designed to move us towards those corporate objectives'*.

For her there were two very concrete examples how this theory was actually operationalised in practice, through first the TCS program and secondly the Leadership Development Programme for the Senior Managers. The TCS programme and its objectives in line with the corporate goals of achieving excellence in customer service have already been discussed in Section A7.6.2.

In replying to the second question designed to obtain an insight into the MD strategy of HL and whom exactly the responsibility lay with, the MD Consultant described the two key players in the process. She revealed that simply it was a case of company and individual responsibility in that: *'Responsibility for investment lies with the Executive. Responsibility for taking ownership for their learning lies with individuals'*. In terms of more specific activities, for example, undertaking an MBA the MD Consultant reiterated the responsibility of the individual. As far as the company was concerned undertaking an MBA *'was really up to individuals and their initiative to propose this and if their manager feels that it is appropriate and worthwhile in terms of career goals, then they will be supported by the company'*. It was indicated that this support would take a number of forms including financial, study leave and access to the OADCs where people could go to use the facilities.

The MD Consultant re-emphasised the importance of these OADCs in more general terms and to her they were *'a very tangible illustration of the company's commitment to supporting individuals'*. She felt that they were integral to the whole philosophy in the organisation, which was designed to allow individuals to develop in as many ways as possible, and they included such resources as videos, tapes and books. Also a recent phenomenon was the *'lunch-time seminars'* which were hosted by the OADCs to engender more communication and awareness about the development in the various divisions.

7.6.4 Human Resource Development Processes

Although the company had achieved *LiP* status many years previously and had since retained it, the MD Consultant preferred to concentrate on the fact that HL had been awarded a National Training Award run by Cranfield School of Management as evidence of the good HRD processes in place. She intimated that this award was based on *'how clearly an organisation's Training and Development supports its corporate objectives'* (this issue of the interlinking of corporate and MD strategy was discussed at more length in Section A7.6.3). She was also aware of other quality awards that had been attained, like VS 7570 and IS9000, but felt that they were more closely connected to the Information Systems area.

The MD Consultant indicated that the competency framework in connection to HRD processes had been in force in HL for number of years (since the customer service opinion). In this framework there are nine key competencies which apply to every single person working in the company, although three different levels of performance are acknowledged because of a series of practicalities including the area that the individual works within and also their level in the organisation. To clarify this the MD Consultant felt

that in relation to the competency entitled '*Strategic Thinking*', clearly there would be considerably more expected of a General or Assistant General Manager than a Customer Services Representative.

It was also pointed out that the competency framework was the main driver for any development and training and was also aligned to the appraisal system – the Contribution Management Process (CMP). One of the keys to its success was through the introduction of a large-scale training programme aimed at the line managers to ensure they could facilitate the process effectively.

The next question in this section followed naturally from the above in that it was designed to establish what the relationship was between the competency framework and reward systems. It was indicated that in the CMP an individual's performance was measured against the nine competencies and the objectives, which they made with their manager at the start of the year (reviewed quarterly), in relation to them. It was also indicated that during these appraisal meetings there is a real focus on what the individuals development needs are in relation to their objectives. The MD Consultant highlighted how the system worked in practice:

The MD needs would be highlighted and then discussed at that point and then the proposals would be put forward about how that person could improve and develop throughout the year. For example there would be nothing to stop an individual manager in going to their manager and saying there is a course or a conference that they feel would help them. They would put a proposal forward of that nature and it is agreed or not with the line manager responsible for that area, who would typically be the AGM who makes the decision because he/she will be the manager with the overall responsibility for the budget for that area. (MD Consultant)

The final question in this section was designed to establish if there were any further measures of success used apart from the actual competency framework, for example passing an examination etc., and if there were any tangible rewards given for achieving an MBA or professional accreditation. In response the MD Consultant made it clear that it is only an individual's performance that would make a difference to their rewards, but ultimately if passing an MBA made someone more effective then that in turn would be likely to yield rewards. She summed up, '*but they would be based on contribution, not on the gaining of the qualification*'.

A7.6.5 Measuring Performance Outcomes

As has been observed above, like the majority of the other organisations studied that main tool for measuring an individual's performance was through the appraisal system and establishing if they had met their objectives as set at the start of the year. The MD consultant related that in effect performance measurement was easier depending on the

types of jobs that they did. For example a Customer Services Representative could be measured on the number of calls they answered, time delay etc. But for other jobs it was much more difficult, for example in People Development, it may be based on the number of courses administered etc.

The tools used to aid this evaluation process were for example '*reverse feedback*' and '*360 degree feedback*', but it was pointed out that ultimately these tools were more important for individuals in roles where behaviour and interpersonal style and skills as much as the tangible output they made are important. In terms of team or department performance measurement it was stated that there was a divisional or departmental contribution plan agreed for each department and in turn there were also contribution plans for each level above right up to the Executive level.

The final question asked of the MD Consultant was to establish if MD made an overall contribution towards individual, team and organisational performance. As one would expect she felt that it was very difficult to measure and evaluate exactly what contribution MD made at any level, because you cannot isolate an individual and see what has happened as a result of the MD intervention. However the MD Consultant felt that in HL, irrespective of the difficulties involved, efforts were made to evaluate wherever possible what affect there had been as a result of MD activities:

For example at the end of a Leadership Development Programme what we will probably do is put on some kind of event, it might involve actually asking the individual to address an actual issue of strategic importance to the company. Then the GM would evaluate the programme on the basis of the outputs.
(MD Consultant)

The MD Consultant offered a personal perspective on the issue of evaluation and though that perhaps the best way was to look at it in terms of '*what would happen if we didn't invest in MD and training?*' She feared that if HL did not train or develop its staff it would be left behind and would lose customers, and ultimately fail and therefore '*that gives you the guide to what you have to do*'.